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LIVES

OF

THE NOVELISTS.

By SIR WALTER SCOTT.

VOL. I.

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The contents of the present volumes are extracted from a very voluminous publication, printed at Edinburgh, entitled *Balantyne's Novelist's Library*. This work, of which several volumes have already appeared, will contain all the British and Foreign standard Novels and Romances. To the productions of each author are prefixed a biographical notice and critical analysis from the pen of Sir Walter Scott. We are led to hope that the republication alone of the biographical notices and critical remarks upon works of fiction, by so great a master in the art as Sir Walter Scott, cannot fail of being favourably received. Anticipating that success, which, considering the universal interest excited by every emanation from one of the most largely gifted minds of the age, we shall reprint the remainder of the lives and critiques, as soon as there shall appear a sufficient number to form another volume. We beg leave to suggest, that these productions of Sir Walter Scott, thus attainable at a trifling expense, cannot be obtained in England but by purchasing the whole collection of the Novelist's Library.

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LIVES

OF

THE NOVELISTS.

FIELDING.

Of all the works of imagination to which English genius has given origin, the novels of the celebrated Henry Fielding are, perhaps, most decidedly and exclusively her own. They are not only altogether beyond the reach of translation, in the proper sense and spirit of the word, but we even question whether they can be fully understood, or relished to the highest extent, by such natives of Scotland and Ireland, as are not habitually acquainted with the character and manners of Old England. Parson Adams, Towwouse, Partridge, above all, Squire Western, are personages as peculiar to England as they are unknown to other countries. Nay, the actors whose character is of a more general cast, as Allworthy, Mrs. Miller, Tom Jones himself, and almost all the subordinate agents in the narrative, have

the same cast of nationality, which adds not a little to the verisimilitude of the tale. The persons of the story live in England, travel in England, quarrel and fight in England; and scarce an incident occurs without its being marked by something which could not well have happened in any other country. This nationality may be ascribed to the author's own habits of life, which rendered him conversant, at different periods, with all the various classes of English society, specimens of which he has selected, with inimitable spirit of choice and description, for the amusement of his readers. Like many other men of talent, Fielding was unfortunate: his life was a life of imprudence and uncertainty. But it was, while passing from the high society to which he was born, to that of the lowest and most miscellaneous kind, that he acquired the extended familiarity with the English character, in every rank and aspect, which has made his name immortal as a painter of national manners.

Henry Fielding, born April 22, 1707, was of noble descent, the third son of General Edmund Fielding, himself the third son of the Honourable John Fielding, who was the fifth son of William, Earl of Denbigh, who died 1655. Our author was nearly connected with the ducal family of Kingston, which boasted a brighter ornament than rank or titles could bestow, in the wit and beauty of the celebrated Lady Mary Wortley Montague. The mother of Henry Fielding was a daughter of Judge Gold, the first

wife of his father, the general. Henry was the only son of this marriage; but he had four sisters of the full blood, of whom Sarah, the third, was distinguished as an authoress by the history of David Simple, and other literary attempts. General Fielding married a second time, after the death of his first lady, and had a numerous family, one of whom is well remembered as a judge of police, by the title of Sir John Fielding. It is most probable that the expense attending so large a family, together with a natural thoughtlessness of disposition on the part of his father, occasioned Henry's being early thrown into those precarious circumstances, with which, excepting at brief intervals, he continued to struggle through life.

After receiving the rudiments of education from the Rev. Mr. Oliver, who is supposed to have furnished him with the outline of Parson Trulliber's character, Fielding was removed to Eton, where he was imbued deeply with that love of classic literature which may be traced through all his works. As his father destined him to the bar, he was sent from Eton to study at Leyden, where he is said to have given earnest attention to the civil law. Had he remained in this regular course of study, the courts would probably have gained a lawyer, and the world would have lost a man of genius; but the circumstances of General Fielding determined the chance in favour of posterity, though, perhaps, against his son. Remittances failed, and the young student was

compelled to return at the age of twenty, to plunge into the dissipation of London, without a monitor to warn him, or a friend to support him. General Fielding, indeed, promised his son an allowance of two hundred pounds a year; but this, as Fielding himself used to say, "any one might pay who would." It is only necessary to add, that Fielding was tall, handsome, and well proportioned, had an expressive countenance, and possessed, with an uncommonly strong constitution, a keen relish of pleasure, with the power of enjoying the present moment, and trusting to chance for the future;—and the reader has before him sufficient grounds to estimate the extent of his improvidence and distress. Lady Mary Wortley Montague, his kinswoman and early acquaintance, has traced his temperament and its consequences in a few lines; and no one, who can use her words, would willingly employ his own.

"I am sorry for Henry Fielding's death," says her ladyship, in one of her letters, upon receiving information of that event, "not only as I shall read no more of his writings, but because I believe he lost more than others, as no man enjoyed life more than he did, though few had less occasion to do so, the highest of his preferment being raking in the lowest sinks of vice and misery. I should think it a nobler and less nauseous employment to be one of the staff-officers that conduct the nocturnal weddings. His happy constitution (even when he had, with great pains half demolished it) made him for-

get every evil, when he was before a venison-pasty, or over a flask of champagne; and, I am persuaded, he has known more happy moments than any prince upon earth. His natural spirits gave him rapture with his cook-maid, and cheerfulness when he was starving in a garret. There was a great similitude between his character and that of Sir Richard Steele. He had the advantage, both in learning, and in my opinion, genius; they both agree in wanting money, in spite of all their friends, and would have wanted it, if their hereditary lands had been as extensive as their imagination! yet each of them was so formed for happiness, it is pity he was not immortal."

Some resources were necessary for a man of pleasure, and Fielding found them in his pen, having, as he used to say himself, no alternative but to be a hackney writer or a hackney coachman. He at first employed himself in writing for the theatre, then in high reputation, having recently engaged the talents of Wycherly, of Congreve, Vanburgh, and Farquhar. Fielding's comedies and farces were brought on the stage in hasty succession; and play after play, to the number of eighteen, sunk or swam on the theatrical sea betwixt the years 1727 and 1736. None of these are now known or read, excepting the mock-tragedy of *Tom Thumb*, the translated play of the *Miser*, and the farces of *The Mock Doctor* and *Intriguing Chambermaid*, and yet they are the production of an author unrivalled for his conception and illustration

of character in the kindred walk of imaginary narrative.

Fielding, the first of British novelists, for such he may surely be termed, has thus added his name to that of Le Sage and others, who, eminent for fictitious narration, have either altogether failed in their dramatic attempts, or, at least, have fallen far short of that degree of excellence which might have been previously augured of them. It is hard to fix upon any plausible reason for a failure, which has occurred in too many instances to be the operation of mere chance, since, *a priori*, one would think the same talents necessary for both walks of literature. Force of character, strength of expression, felicity of contrast and situation, a well constructed plot, in which the development is at once natural and unexpected, and where the interest is kept uniformly alive, till summed up by the catastrophe—all these are requisites as essential to the labour of the novelist as to that of the dramatist, and, indeed, appear to comprehend the sum of the qualities necessary to success in both departments. Fielding's biographers have, in this particular instance, explained his lack of theatrical success as arising entirely from the careless haste with which he huddled up his dramatic compositions; it being no uncommon thing with him to finish an act or two in a morning, and to write out whole scenes upon the paper in which his favourite tobacco had been wrapped up. Negligence of this kind will, no doubt, give rise to great inequali-

ties in the productions of an author so careless of his reputation, but will scarcely account for an attribute something like dulness, which pervades Fielding's plays, and which is rarely found in those works which a man of genius throws off "at a heat," to use Dryden's expression, in prodigal self-reliance on his internal resources. Neither are we at all disposed to believe, that an author so careless as Fielding, took much more pains in labouring his novels than in composing his plays, and we are therefore compelled to seek some other and more general reason for the inferiority of the latter. This may, perhaps, be found in the nature of these two studies, which intimately connected as they seem to be, are yet naturally distinct in some very essential particulars, so much so as to vindicate the general opinion, that he who applies himself with eminent success to the one, becomes, in some degree, unqualified for the other, like the artisan, who, by a particular turn for excellence in one mechanical department, loses the habit of dexterity necessary for acquitting himself with equal reputation in another; or, as the artist who has dedicated himself to the use of water colours, is usually less distinguished by his skill in oil-painting.

It is the sole object of the novel-writer to place before the reader as full and accurate a representation of the events which he relates as can be done by the mere force of an excited imagination, without the assistance of material objects. His sole appeal is made to the world of fancy and of ideas, and in this

consists his strength and his weakness, his poverty and his wealth. He cannot, like the painter, present a visible and tangible representation of his towns and his woods, his palaces and his castles; but, by awakening the imagination of a congenial reader, he places before his mind's eye landscapes fairer than those of Claude, and wilder than those of Salvator. He cannot, like the dramatist, present before our living eyes the heroes of former days, or the beautiful creations of his own fancy, embodied in the grace and majesty of Kemble or of Siddons; but he can teach his reader to conjure up forms even more dignified and beautiful than theirs. The same difference follows him through every branch of his art. The author of a novel, in short, has neither stage nor scene painter, nor company of comedians, nor dresser, nor wardrobe; words, applied with the best of his skill, must supply all that these bring to the assistance of the dramatist. Action, and tone, and gesture, the smile of the lover, the frown of the tyrant, the grimace of the buffoon, all must be told, for nothing can be shown. Thus the very dialogue becomes mixed with the narration, for he must not only tell what the characters actually said, in which his task is the same as that of the dramatic author, but must also describe the tone, the look, the gesture, with which their speech was accompanied—telling, in short, all which in the drama it becomes the province of the actor to express. It must, therefore, frequently happen, that the author best qualified for a prov-

ince in which all depends on the communication of his own ideas and feelings to the reader, without any intervening medium, may fall short of the skill necessary to adapt his compositions to the medium of the stage, where the very qualities most excellent in a novelist are out of place, and an impediment to success. Description and narration, which form the very essence of the novel, must be very sparingly introduced into dramatic composition, and scarce ever have a good effect upon the stage. Mr. Puff, in *The Critic*, has the good sense to leave out "all about gilding the eastern hemisphere," and the very first thing which the players struck out of his memorable tragedy, was the description of Queen Elizabeth, her palfrey, and her side-saddle. The drama speaks to the eye and ear, and when it ceases to address these bodily organs, and would exact from a theatrical audience that exercise of the imagination which is necessary to follow forth and embody circumstances neither spoken nor exhibited, there is an immediate failure, though it may be the failure of a man of genius. Hence it follows that though a good acting play may be made, by selecting a plot and characters from a novel, yet scarce any effort of genius could render a play into a narrative romance. In the former case, the author has only to contract, the events within the space necessary for representation, to choose the most striking characters, and exhibit them in the most forcible contrast, discard from the dialogue whatever is redundant or tedious,

and so dramatize the whole. But we know not any effort of genius which could successfully insert into a good play those accessaries of description and delineation which are necessary to dilate it into a readable novel. It may thus easily be conceived, that he whose chief talent lies in addressing the imagination only, and whose style, therefore, must be expanded and circumstantial, may fail in a kind of composition where so much must be left to the efforts of the actor, with his allies and assistants, the scene-painter and property-man, and where every attempt to interfere with their province, is an error unfavourable to the success of the piece. Besides, it must be farther remembered, that in fictitious narrative an author carries on his manufacture alone, and upon his own account, whereas, in dramatic writing, he enters into partnership with the performers, and it is by their joint efforts that the piece is to succeed. Copartnery is called, by civilians, the mother of discord; and, how likely it is to prove so in the present instance, may be illustrated by reference to the admirable dialogue between the player and poet, in Joseph Andrews, book iii. chap. 10. The poet must either be contented to fail, or to make great condescensions to the experience, and pay much attention to the peculiar qualifications of those by whom his piece is to be represented. And he, who, in a novel, had only to fit sentiments, action, and character, to ideal beings, is now compelled to assume the much more difficult task of adapting all these to real existing

persons, who, unless their parts are exactly suited to their own taste, and their peculiar capacities, have, each in his line, the means, and not unfrequently the inclination, to ruin the success of the play. Such are, amongst many others, the peculiar difficulties of the dramatic art, and they seem impediments which lie peculiarly in the way of the novelist who aspires to extend his sway over the stage.

We have noticed that, until the year 1737, or thereabouts, Fielding lived the life of a man of wit and pleasure about town, seeking and finding amusement in scenes of gaiety and dissipation, and discharging the expense incidental to such a life, by the precarious resources afforded by the stage. He even became, for a season, the manager of a company, having assembled together, in 1735, a number of discarded comedians, who he proposed should execute his own dramas at the little theatre in the Haymarket, under the title of the Great Mogul's Company of Comedians. The project did not succeed; and the company, which, as he expressed it, had seemed to drop from the clouds, were under the necessity of disbanding.

During his theatrical career, Fielding, like most authors of the time, found it impossible to interest the public sufficiently in the various attempts which he made to gain popular favour, without condescending to flatter their political animosities. Two of his dramatic pieces, *Pasquin* and the *Historical Register*, display great acrimony against Sir Robert Wal-

pole, from whom in the year 1730, he had in vain sought for patronage.* The freedom of his satire is said to have operated considerably in producing a measure which was thought necessary to arrest the license of the stage, and put an end to that proneness to personal and political satire, which had been fostered by the success of Gay's *Beggar's Opera.* This measure was the discretionary power vested in the Lord Chamberlain of refusing a license to any piece of which he should disapprove. The regulation was the cause of much clamour at the time; but licentious satire has since found so many convenient modes of access to the public, that its exclusion from the stage is no longer a matter of interest or regret; nor is it now deemed a violent aggression on liberty, that contending political parties cannot be brought into collision within the walls of the theatres, intended as they are for places of public amusemeut, not for scenes of party struggle.

About 1736, Fielding seems to have formed the resolution of settling in life. He espoused a young lady of Salisbury, named Craddock; beautiful, amiable, and possessed of 1500*l.* About the same time by the death, it has been supposed, of his mother, he succeeded to a small estate of about 200*l.* per annum, situated at Stower, in Derbyshire, affording him, in those days, the means of decent competence. To this place he retired from London, but unfortunate-

* We preserve, at the end of this life, the verses addressed to Walpole on this occasion, as a specimen of Fielding's poetry,

ly carried with him the same improvident disposition to enjoy the present, at the expense of the future, which seems to have marked his whole life. He established an equipage, with showy liveries; and his biographers lay some stress on the circumstance, that the colour being a bright yellow, required to be frequently renewed; an important particular, which, in humble imitation of our accurate predecessors, we deem it unpardonable to suppress. Horses, hounds, and the exercise of an unbounded hospitality, soon aided the yellow livery-men in devouring the substance of their improvident master; and three years found Fielding without land, home or revenue, a student in the Temple, where he applied himself closely to the law, and after the usual term was called to the bar. It is probable he brought nothing from Derbyshire, save that experience of a rural life and its pleasures, which afterwards enabled him to delineate the inimitable Squire Western

Fielding had now a profession, and as he had strongly applied his powerful mind to the principles of the law, it might have been expected that success would have followed in proportion. But those professional persons, who can advance or retard the practice of a young lawyer, mistrusted probably the application of a wit and a man of pleasure to the business they might otherwise have confided to him; and it is said that Fielding's own conduct was such as to justify their want of confidence. Disease, the consequence of a free life, came to the aid of dissi-

pation of mind, and interrupted the course of Fielding's practice by severe fits of the gout, which gradually impaired his robust constitution. We find him, therefore, having again recourse to the stage, where he attempted to produce a continuation of his own piece, *The Virgin Unmasked:* but as one of the characters was supposed to be written in ridicule of a man of quality, the chamberlain refused his license. Pamphlets of political controversy, fugitive tracts, and essays, were the next means he had recourse to for subsistence; and as his ready pen produced them upon every emergency, he contrived by the profits to support himself and his family, to which he was fondly attached.

Amid this anxious career of precarious expedient and constant labour, he had the misfortune to lose his wife: and his grief at this domestic calamity was so extreme, that his friends became alarmed for the consequences to his reason. The violence of the emotion, however, was transient, though his regret was lasting; and the necessity of subsistence compelled him again to resume his literary labours. At length, in the year 1741 or 1742, circumstances induced him to engage in a mode of composition, which he retrieved from the disgrace in which he found it, and rendered a classical department of British literature.

The novel of *Pamela*, published 1740, had carried the fame of Richardson to the highest pitch; and Fielding, whether he was tired of hearing it over

praised (for a book, several passages of which would now be thought highly indelicate, was in those days even recommended from the pulpit), or whether, as a writer for daily subsistence, he caught at whatever interested the public for the time; or whether, in fine, he was seduced by that wicked spirit of wit, which cannot forbear turning into ridicule the idol of the day, resolved to caricature the style, principles, and personages of this favourite performance. As Gay's desire to satirize Philips gave rise to the *Shepherd's Week*, so Fielding's purpose to ridicule *Pamela* produced the *History of Joseph Andrews;* and, in both cases, but especially in the latter, a work was executed infinitely better than could have been expected to arise out of such a motive, and the reader received a degree of pleasure far superior to what the author himself appears to have proposed. There is, indeed, a fine vein of irony in Fielding's novel, as will appear from comparing it with the pages of *Pamela.* But *Pamela*, to which that irony was applied, is now in a manner forgotten, and *Joseph Andrews* continues to be read, for the admirable pictures of manners which it presents; and, above all, for the inimitable character of Mr. Abraham Adams, which alone is sufficient to stamp the superiority of Fielding over all writers of his class. His learning, his simplicity, his evangelical purity of mind, and benevolence of disposition, are so admirably mingled with pedantry, absence of mind, and with the habit of athletic and gymnastic exercise, then acquired at the

universities by students of all descriptions, that he may be safely termed one of the richest productions of the Muse of fiction. Like Don Quixote, Parson Adams is beaten a little too much, and too often; but the cudgel lights upon his shoulders, as on those of the honoured Knight of La Mancha, without the slightest stain to his reputation, and he is bastinaded without being degraded. The style of this piece is said, in the preface, to have been an imitation of Cervantes; but both in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, the author appears also to have had in view the *Roman Comique* of the once celebrated Scaron. From this authority he has copied the mock-heroic style, which tells ludicrous events in the language of the classical epic; a vein of pleasantry which is soon wrought out, and which Fielding has employed so often as to expose him to the charge of pedantry.

Joseph Andrews was eminently successful; and the aggrieved Richardson, who was fond of praise even to adulation, was proportionally offended while his group of admirers, male and female, took care to echo back his sentiments, and to heap Fielding with reproach. Their animosity survived his life, and we find the most ungenerous reproaches thrown upon his memory, in the course of Richardson's correspondence. Richardson was well aquainted with Fielding's sisters, and complained to them—not of Fielding's usage of himself, that he was too wise, or too proud to mention, but—of his unfortunate predilection to what was mean and low in character and description. The following expressions are remarkable, as well for the extreme

modesty of the writer, who thus rears himself into the paramount judge of Fielding's qualities, and for the delicacy which could intrude such observations on the ear of his rival's sister: "Poor Fielding, I could not help telling his sister, that I was equally surprised at, and concerned for, his continued lowness. Had your brother, said I, been born in a stable, or been a runner at a spunging-house one should have thought him a genius, and wished he had had the advantage of a liberal education, and of being admitted into good company!" After this we are not surprised at its being alleged that Fielding was destitute of invention and talents; that the run of his best works was nearly over; and that he would soon be forgotten as an author. Fielding does not appear to have retorted any of this ill will, so that, if he gave the first offence, and that an unprovoked one, he was also the first to retreat from the contest, and to allow to Richardson those claims which his genius really demanded from the liberality of his contemporaries. In the fifth number of the Jacobite Journal, Fielding highly commends *Clarissa*, which is by far the best and most powerful of Richardson's novels; and, with those scenes in *Sir Charles Grandison* which refer to the history of Clementinia, contains the passages of deep pathos on which his claim to immortality must finally rest. Perhaps this is one of the cases in which one would rather have sympathized with the thoughtless offender, than with the illiberal and ungenerous mind which so long retained its resentment.

After the publication of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding had again recourse to the stage, and brought out *The Wedding-Day*, which, though on the whole unsuccessful, produced him some small profit. This was the last of his theatrical efforts which appeared during his life. The manuscript comedy of *The Fathers* was lost by Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, and, when recovered, was acted, after the author's death, for the benefit of his family. An anecdote respecting the carelessness with which Fielding regarded his theatrical fame, is thus given by former biographers :— .

"On one of the days of its rehearsal (i. e. the rehearsal of the Wedding-Day) Garrick, who performed a principal part, and who was even then a favourite with the public, told Fielding he was apprehensive that the audience would make free with him in a particular passage; and remarked that, as a repulse might disconcert him during the remainder of the night, the passage should be omitted :—'No d—n 'em,' replied he,' if the scene is not a good one, let them find *that* out.' Accordingly the play was brought out without alteration, and, as had been foreseen, marks of disapprobation appeared. Garrick, alarmed at the hisses he had met with, retired into the green-room, where the author was solacing himself with a bottle of champagne. He had by this time drank pretty freely—and glancing his eye at the actor, while clouds of tobacco issued from his mouth, cried out, 'What's the matter, Garrick? what are they hissing now?' 'Why the scene that I begged you to retrench,' replied the actor;

'I knew it would not do; and they have so frightened me, that I shall not be able to collect myself again the whole night.' 'Oh! d—n 'em,' rejoined he, with great coolness, 'they *have* found it out, have they?"

Besides various fugitive pieces, Fielding published, in or about 1743, a volume of Miscellanies, including *The Journey from this World to the Next*, a tract containing a good deal of Fielding's peculiar humor, but of which it is difficult to conceive the plan or purport. *The History of Jonathan Wild the Great*, next followed. It is not easy to see what Fielding proposed to himself by a picture of complete vice, unrelieved by any thing of human feeling, and never, by any accident, even deviating into virtue; and the ascribing a train of fictitious adventures to a real character has in it something clumsy and inartificial on the one hand, and, on the other, subjects the author to a suspicion that he only used the title of Jonathan Wild in order to connect his book with the popular renown of that infamous depredator. But there are few passages in Fielding's more celebrated works more marked by his peculiar genius than the scene betwixt his hero and the ordinary when in Newgate.

Besides these more permanent proofs of his industrious application to literature, the pen of Fielding was busily employed in the political and literary controversies of the times. He conducted one paper called *The Jacobite Journal*, the object of which was to eradicate those feelings and sentiments which had

been already so effectually crushed upon the Field of Culloden. *The True Patriot* and *Champion* were works of the same kind, which he entirely composed, or in which at least, he had a principal share. In these various papers he steadily advocated what was then called the whig cause, being attached to the principles of the revolution, and the royal family of Brunswick, or, in other words, a person well affected to church and state. His zeal was long unnoticed, while far inferior writers were enriched out of the secret service money with unexampled prodigality. At length, in 1749, he received a small pension, together with the then disreputable office of a justice of peace for Westminster and Middlesex, of which he was at liberty to make the best he could by the worst means he chose. This office, such as it was, he owed to the interference of Mr. afterwards Lord Lyttleton.

At this period, the magistrates of Westminster, thence termed trading justices, were repaid by fees for their services to the public; a mean and wretched system, which made it the interest of these functionaries to inflame every petty dispute which was brought before them, to trade as it were in guilt and in misery, and to wring their precarious subsistence out of theives and pickpockets. The habits of Fielding, never choice or select in his society, were not improved by that to which his place exposed him. Horace Walpole gives us, in his usual unfeeling but lively manner, the following description of a visit made to Field-

ing in his capacity of a justice, by which we see his mind had stooped itself completely to his situation. "Rigby gave me as strong a picture of nature. He and Peter Bathurst, t'other night, carried a servant of the latter's, who had attempted to shoot him, before Fielding, who, to all his other vocations, has, by the grace of Mr. Lyttleton, added that of Middlesex justice. He sent them word he was at supper—they must come next morning. They did not understand that freedom, and ran up, where they found him banquetting with a blind man, a wh——, and three Irishmen, on some cold mutton and a bone of ham, both in one dish, and the dirtiest cloth. He never stirred or asked them to sit. Rigby, who had seen him come so often to beg a guinea of Sir C. Williams, and Bathurst, at whose father's he had lived, for victuals, understood that dignity as little, and pulled themselves chairs, on which he civilized."*

This is a humiliating anecdote, even after we have made allowance for the aristocratic exaggeration of Walpole, who, in acknowledging Fielding's talents elsewhere, has not failed to stigmatize the lowness of his society and habits.† Yet it is consoling

* Letters from the Hon. Horace Walpole to George Montague, Esq. *London*, 1818, p. 58.

† In his poetical account of Twickenham, Fielding's residence in the neighbourhood is not forgotten:

Where Fielding met his bunter muse,
And as they quaff'd the fiery juice,
Droll Nature stamp'd each lucky hit,
With unimaginable wit.

The Parish Register of Twickenham.

to observe that Fielding's principles remained unshaken, though the circumstances attending his official situation tended to increase the careless disrespectability of his private habits. His own account of his conduct respecting the dues of the office, on which he depended for his subsistence, has never been denied or doubted.

"I will confess," says he, "that my private affairs, at the beginning of the winter, had but a gloomy aspect; for I had not plundered the public or the poor, of those sums which men, who are always ready to plunder both as much as they can, have been pleased to suspect me of taking; on the contrary, by composing, instead of inflaming the quarrels of porters and beggars (which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised), and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about 500*l.* a year of the dirtiest money upon earth, to little more than 300*l* a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk."

Besides the disinterestedness of which he set an example unusual in these days, Fielding endeavoured, by various suggestions, to abridge the catalogue of crimes and depravity, which his office placed so closely under his eye.

His *Inquiry into the Increase of Theives and Robbers*, contains several hints which have been adopted by succeeding statesmen, and some which are still worthy of more attention than they have yet

received. As a magistrate, indeed, he was desirous of retrieving the dignity and independence of his own office, and his zeal on that subject has led him a little farther than he will be followed by the friends of rational freedom. But we cannot omit mentioning, that he was the first to touch on the frequency of pardons, rendered necessary by the multiplication of capital punishments, and that he placed his finger on that swelling imposthume of the state, the poor's rates, which has wrought so much evil, and is likely to work so much more. He published also a *Charge to the Grand Jury of Middlesex*, some *Tracts concerning Law Trials* of importance, and left behind him a manuscript on crown-law. On the subject of the poor, he afterwards published a scheme for restricting them to their parishes, and providing for them in workhouses, which, like many others which have since appeared, only showed that he was fully sensible of the evil, without being able to suggest an effectual or practical remedy. A subsequent writer on the same thorny subject, Sir Frederic Morton Eden, observes, that Fielding's treatise exhibits both the knowledge of the magistrate and the energy and expression of the novel-writer. It was, however, before publishing his scheme for the provision of the poor, that he made himself immortal by the production of *Tom Jones.*

The History of a Foundling was composed under all the disadvantages incident to an author, alternately pressed by the disagreeable task of his magisterial du-

ties, and by the necessity of hurrying out some ephemeral essay or pamphlet to meet the demands of the passing day. It is inscribed to the Honourable Mr. Lyttleton, afterward Lord Lyttleton, with a dedication, in which he intimates, that, without his assistance and that of the Duke of Bedford, the work had never been completed, as the author had been indebted to them for the means of subsistence while engaged in composing it. Ralph Allen, the friend of Pope, is also alluded to as one of his benefactors, but unnamed by his own desire: thus confirming the truth of Pope's beautiful couplet:—

> Let humble Allen, with an awkward shame,
> Do good by stealth and blush to find it fame.

It is said that this munificent and modest patron made Fielding a present of 200*l.* at one time, and that even before he was personally acquainted with him.

Under such precarious circumstances, the first English novel was given to the public, which had not yet seen any works of fiction founded upon the plan of painting from nature. Even Richardson's novels are but a step from the old romance, approaching, indeed, more nearly to the ordinary course of events, but still dealing in improbable incidents, and in characters swelled out beyond the ordinary limits of humanity. The *History of a Foundling* is truth and human nature itself, and there lies the inestimable advantage which it possesses over all previous fictions of this par-

ticular kind. It was received with unanimous acclamation by the public, and proved so productive to Millar, the publisher, that he handsomely added 100*l.* to 600*l.* for which he had purchased the work from the author.

The general merits of this popular and delightful work have been so often dwelt upon, and its imperfections so frequently censured, that we can do little more than hastily run over ground which has been so repeatedly occupied. The felicitous contrivance and happy extrication of the story, where every incident tells upon and advances the catastrophe, while, at the same time, it illustrates the characters of those interested in its approach, cannot too often be mentioned with the highest approbation. The attention of the reader is never diverted or puzzled by unnecessary digressions, or recalled to the main story by abrupt and startling recurrences; he glides down the narrative like a boat on the surface of some broad navigable stream, which only winds enough to gratify the voyager with the varied beauty of its banks. One exception to this praise, otherwise so well merited, occurs in the story of the Old Man of the Hill; an episode, which, in compliance with a custom introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage, Fielding has thrust into the midst of his narrative, as he had formerly introduced the History of Leonora, equally unnecessarily and inartificially, into that of *Joseph Andrews*. It has also been wondered why Fielding should have chosen to leave the stain of illegitimacy on the birth

his hero; and it has been surmised that he did so in allusion to his own first wife, who was also a natural child.

A better reason may be discovered in the story itself; for, had Miss Bridget been privately married to the father of Tom Jones, there could have been no adequate motive assigned for keeping his birth secret from a man so reasonable and compassionate as Allworthy.

But even the high praise due to the construction and arrangement of the story is inferior to that claimed by the truth, force, and spirit of the characters, from Tom Jones himself, down to Black George the gamekeeper, and his family. Amongst these, Squire Weston stands alone; imitated from no prototype, and in himself an inimitable picture of ignorance, prejudice, irascibility, and rusticity, united with natural shrewdness, constitutional good-humour, and an instinctive affection for his daughter—all which qualities, good and bad, are grounded upon that basis of thorough selfishness natural to one bred up from infancy where no one dared to contradict his arguments, or to control his conduct. In one incident alone, we think Fielding has departed from this admirable sketch. As an English squire, Western ought not to have taken a beating so unresistingly from the friend of Lord Fellamar. We half suspect that the passage is an interpolation. It is inconsistent with the squire's readiness to engage in rustic affrays. We grant a pistol or sword might have appalled him, but Squire Western

should have yielded to no one in the use of the English horsewhip—and as, with all his brutalities, we have a sneaking interest in the honest, jolly country gentleman, we would willingly hope there is some mistake in this matter.

The character of Jones, otherwise a model ef generosity, openness, manly spirit mingled with thoughtless dissipation, is in like manner unnecessarily degraded by the nature of his intercourse with Lady Bellaston; and this is one of the circumstances which incline us to believe that Fielding's ideas of what was gentleman-like and honorable, had sustained some depreciation, in consequence of the unhappy circumstances of his life, and of the society to which they condemned him.

A more sweeping and general objection was made against the *History of a Foundling* by the admirers of Richardson, and has been often repeated since. It is alleged that the ultimate moral of *Tom Jones*, which conducts to happiness, and holds up to our sympathy and esteem, a youth who gives way to licentious habits, is detrimental to society, and tends to encourage the youthful reader in the practice of those follies, to which his natural passions and the usual course of the world but too much direct him. French delicacy, which, on so many occasions, has strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel, saw this fatal tendency in the work, and, by an *arret*, discharged the circulation of a bungled abridgment by De la Place, entitled a translation. To this charge Fielding himself might probably

have replied, that the vices into which Jones suffers himself to fall are made the direct cause of placing him in the distressful situation which he occupies during the greater part of the narrative; while his generosity, his charity, and his amiable qualities, become the means of saving him from the consequences of his folly. But we suspect, with Dr. Johnson, that there is something of cant both in the objection and in the answer to it. "Men," says that moralist, "will not become highwaymen because Macheath is acquitted on the stage;" and, we add, they will not become swindlers and thieves because they sympathize with the fortunes of the witty picaroon Gil Blas, or licentious debauchees, because they read *Tom Jones*. The professed moral of a piece is usually what the reader is least interested in; it is like the mendicant who cripples after some gay and splendid procession, and in vain solicits the attention of those who have been gazing upon it. Excluding from consideration those infamous works which address themselves directly to awakening the grosser passions of our nature, we are inclined to think the worst evil to be apprehended from the perusal of novels is, that the habit is apt to generate an indisposition to real history and useful literature; and that the best which can be hoped is, that they may sometimes instruct the youthful mind by real pictures of life, and sometimes awaken their better feelings and sympathies by strains of generous sentiments, and tales of fictitious wo. Beyond this point they are a mere elegance, a luxury contrived for the amusement of polished life, and the

gratification of that half love of literature which pervades all ranks in an advanced stage of society, and are read much more for amusement than with the least hope of deriving instruction from them. The vices and follies of Tom Jones are those which the world soon teaches to all who enter on the career of life, and to which society is unhappily but too indulgent; nor do we believe that, in any one instance, the perusal of Fielding's novel has added one libertine to the large list who would not have been such, had it never crossed the press. And it is with concern we add our sincere belief, that the fine picture of frankness and generosity exhibited in that fictitious character has had as few imitators as the career of his follies. Let it not be supposed that we are indifferent to morality, because we treat with scorn that affectation which, while in common life it connives at the open practice of libertinism, pretends to detest the memory of an author who painted life as it was, with all its shades, and more than all the lights which it occasionally exhibits to relieve them. For particular passages of the work, the author can only be defended under the custom of his age, which permitted, in certain cases, much stronger language than ours. He has himself said that there is nothing which can offend the chastest eye in the perusal, and he spoke probably according to the ideas of his time. But, in modern estimation, there are several passages at which delicacy may justly take offence; and, we can only say, that they may be termed rather jocularly coarse than seductive, and that

they are atoned for by the admirable mixture of wit and argument, by which, in others, the cause of true religion and virtue is supported and advanced.

Fielding considered his works as an experiment in British literature; and, therefore, he chose to prefix a preliminary chapter to each book, explanatory of his own views, and of the rules attached to this mode of composition. Those critical introductions, which rather interrupt the course of the story, and the flow of the interest at the first perusal, are found on a second or third, the most entertaining chapters of the whole work.

The publication of *Tom Jones* carried Fielding's fame to its height; but seems to have been attended with no consequences to his fortune, beyond the temporary relief which the copy money afforded him. It was after this period that he published his proposal for making an effectual provision for the poor, formerly noticed, and a pamphlet relating to the mysterious case of the celebrated Elizabeth Canning, in which he adopted the cause of common sense against popular prejudice, and failed, in consequence, in the object of his publication.

Amelia was the author's last work of importance. It may be termed a continuation of Tom Jones, but we have not the same sympathy for the ungrateful and dissolute conduct of Booth, which we yield to the youthful follies of Jones. The character of Amelia is said to have been drawn for Fielding's second wife. If he put her patience, as has been alleged, to tests of the same kind, he has, in some de-

gree, repaid her, by the picture he has drawn of her feminine delicacy and pure tenderness. Fielding's novels show few instances of pathos; it was, perhaps, inconsistent with the life which he was compelled to lead; for those who see most of human misery, become necessarily, in some degree, hardened to its effects. But few scenes of fictitious distress are more affecting than that in which Amelia is described as having made her little preparations for the evening, and sitting in anxious expectation of the return of her unworthy husband, whose folly is, in the mean time, preparing for her new scenes of misery. But our sympathy for the wife is disturbed by our dislike of her unthankful husband; and the tale is, on the whole, unpleasing, even though relieved by the humours of the doughty Colonel Bath, and the learned Dr. Harrison, characters drawn with such force and precision as Fielding alone knew how to employ.

Millar puplished Amelia in 1751. He had paid a thousand pounds for the copyright; and when he began to suspect that the work would be judged inferior to its predecessor, he employed the following stratagem to push it upon the trade. At a sale made to the booksellers, previous to the publication, Millar offered his friends his other publications on the usual terms of discount; but when he came to *Amelia*, he laid it aside, as a work in such demand, that he could not afford to deliver it to the trade in the usual manner. The *ruse* succeeded, the impression was anxiously bought up, and the bookseller relieved from every apprehension of a slow sale.

Notwithstanding former failures, Fielding, in 1752, commenced a new attempt at a literary newspaper and review, which he entitled the *Covent Garden Journal*, to be published twice a week, and conducted by Sir Alexander Drawcansir. It was the author's failing that he could not continue any plan of this nature, for which otherwise his ready pen, sharp wit, and classical knowledge, so highly fitted him, without involving himself in some of the party squabbles, or petty literary broils of the day. On the present occasion, he was not long ere he involved himself in a quarrel with Dr. Hill, and other periodical writers. Among the latter, we are sorry to particularize Smollet, although possessed of the most kindred genius to Fielding's, which has yet appeared in British literature. The warfare was of short duration, and neither party would obtain honour by an inquiry into the cause or conduct of its hostilities.

Meanwhile, Feilding's life was fast decaying; a complication of diseases had terminated in a dropsical habit, which totally undermined his strong constitution. The Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister, was desirous of receiving assistance from him in the formation of a plan for the remedy and prevention of secret robberies, and improving the police of the metropolis. For the small consideration of 600*l.*, paid by the government, Fielding engaged to extirpate several gangs of daring ruffians, which at this time infested London and its vicinity; and though his health was reduced to the last extremity, he continued himself

to superintend the conduct of his agents, to take evidence, and make commitments, until this great object was attained.

These last exertions seem to have been fatal to his exhausted frame, which suffered at once under dropsy, and jaundice, and asthma. The Bath waters were tried in vain, and various modes of cure or alleviation were resorted to, of which tapping only appears to have succeeded to a certain extent. The medical attendants gave their last sad advice in recommending a milder climate. Of his departure for Lisbon, in conformity with their advice, he has himself left the following melancholy record, painting the man and his situation a thousand times better than any other pen could achieve.

"On this day, Wednesday, June 26th, 1754,"* he says, "the most melancholy sun I had ever beheld arose, and found me awake at my house at Fordhook. By the light of this sun I was, in my own opinion, last to behold and take leave of some of those creatures on whom I doated with a mother-like fondness, guided by nature and passion, and uncured and unhardened by all the doctrine of that philosophical school, where I had learned to bear pains, and to despise death. In this situation, as I could not conquer nature, I submitted entirely to her, and she made as great a fool of me, as she had ever done of any woman whatsoever; under pretence of

* Voyage to Lisbon, p. 1.

giving me leave to enjoy, she drew me in to suffer the company of my little ones, during eight hours; and I doubt not whether, in that time, I did not undergo more than in all my distemper. At twelve precisely my coach was at the door, which was no sooner told me, than I kissed my children round, and went into it with some little resolution. My wife, who behaved more like a heroine and philosopher, though at the same time the tenderest mother in the world, and my eldest daughter, followed me. Some friends went with us, and others here took their leave; and I heard my behaviour applauded, with many murmurs and praises, to which I well knew I had no title."

This affecting passage makes a part of his *Journey to Lisbon*, a work which he commenced during the voyage, with a hand trembling in almost its latest hour. It remains a singular example of Fielding's natural strength of mind, that, while struggling hard at once with the depression, and with the irritability of disease, he could still exhibit a few flashes of that bright wit, which could once set the "world" in a roar. His perception of character, and power of describing it, had not forsaken him in those sad moments; for the master of the ship in which he sailed, the scolding landlady of the Isle of Wight, the military coxcomb, who visits their vessel, are all portraits, marked with the master-hand which traced Parson Adams and Squire Western.

The *Journey to Lisbon* was abridged by fate.

Fielding reached that city, indeed, alive, and remained there two months; but he was unable to continue his proposed literary labours. The hand of death was upon him, and seized upon his prey in the beginning of October, 1754. He died in the 48th year of his life, leaving behind him a widow, and four children, one of whom died soon afterwards. His brother Sir John Fielding, well known as a magistrate, aided by the bounty of Mr. Allen, made suitable provision for the survivors; but of their fate we are ignorant.

Thus lived and thus died, at a period of life when the world might have expected continued delight from his matured powers, the celebrated Henry Fielding, father of the English novel; and in his powers of strong and national humour, and forcible yet natural exhibition of character, unapproached, as yet, even by his successful followers.

The following is a list of the works of Fielding, so far as they are known in the present day:

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS.

The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his friend Mr. Abraham Adams,

The History of a Foundling.

Amelia.

The History of the life of Jonathan Wild the Great.

A Journey from this World to the Next.

Miscellanies, published in one volnme, containing

two Essays, on Conversation, and on the Knowledge and Character of Men, with several Poems, &c.

An Address to the Grand Jury of the County of Middlesex.

Examples of the Interposition of Providence, in the Detection and Punishment of Murder. With an Introduction and Conclusion.

A Proposal for making an Effectual Provision for the Poor, for amending their Morals, and rendering them useful Members of Society.

An Inquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers. &c. with some Proposals for remedying the growing Evil, in which the laws relating to Felons are freely considered.

Of the Remedy of Affliction for the loss of our Friends.

Translation of the first Olynthiac of Demosthenes.

An Answer to a Pamphlet, entitled "An Apology for the Conduct of a late celebrated Second-rate Minister, when he commenced Courtier."

A Clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning.

Case of Bosaverus Penlez.

Prefaces to David Simple, and the familiar Letters between David Simple and others.

An Ironical Imitation of Natural History, in a Description of a Guinea, as a newly discovered Insect or Animal, under the name of the terrestrial Chrysippus, or Golden-foot.

DRAMATIC WORKS.

Love in Several Masques, a Comedy in Three Acts.

The Temple Beau, a Comedy, in Five Acts.

The Author's Farce, with a Puppet-show, called Pleasures of the Town, in Three Acts.

The Coffeehouse Politician, or the Justice caught in his own Trap, a comedy in Five Acts.

The Tragedy of Tragedies, or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, with Annotations, in Three Acts.

The Letter-Writers, or a New Way to Keep a Wife at Home, a Farce.

The Lottery, a Farce.

The Grub-Street Opera, a Farce.

The Modern Husband, a Play, in Five Acts.

The Mock Doctor, or the Dumb Lady Cured, a Ballad Farce.

The Covent-Garden Tragedy, a Burlesque.

The Miser, a Farce.

The Intriguing Chambermaid, a Ballad Farce, in Two Acts.

The Debauchees, or the Jesuit Caught, a Farce.

Don Quixote in England.

The Old Man taught Wisdom, or the Virgin Unmasked, a Farce.

The Universal Gallant, or the Different husbands, a Comedy, in Five Acts.

Pasquin, a Dramatic Satire on the Times, being the Rehearsal of Two Plays. &c.

The Historical Register, for 1736.

Eurydice, a Farce.

Eurydice Hiss'd, or a Word to the Wise.

Tumble-down Dick, or Phaeton in the Suds.

Miss Lucy in Town, a Sequel to the Virgin Unmasked, a Farce.

Plutus, the God of Riches, translated from the Greek of Aristophanes.

The wedding-day, a Comedy, in Five Acts.

An Interlude between Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Mercury.

The Fathers, or the Good-natured Man, a Comedy, in Five Acts.

A Dialogue between Alexander the Great and Diogenes the Cynic.

PERIODICAL PAPERS, IN WHICH HE WAS ENGAGED.

The Champion.

The True Patriot.

The Jacobite Journal, and

The Covent Garden Journal.

POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon.

Some Tracts relating to the Poor &c. published in substance by Sir John Fielding.

Comment on Lord Bolingbroke's Essays, a Fragment of which only was in a state fit for publication.

Besides these, a work remained in the hands of Sir John Fielding, on the subject of Crown Law, which was never published.

APPENDIX.

An Epistle to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole.

While at the helm of state you ride,
Our nation's envy and its pride;
While foreign courts with wonder gaze,
And curse those councils which they praise;
Would you not wonder, sir, to view
Your bard a greater man than you?
Which that he is, you cannot doubt,
When you have read the sequel out.

You know, great sir, that ancient fellows,
Philosophers, and such folks, tell us,
No great analogy between
Greatness and happiness is seen.
If then, as it might follow straight,
Wretched to be, is to be *great;*
Forbid it, gods, that you should try,
What 'tis to be so great as I!

The family, that dines the latest,
Is in our street esteem'd the greatest;
But latest hours must surely fall
'Fore him who never dines at all.

Your taste in architect, you know,
Hath been admired by friend and foe;
But can your earthly domes compare
With all my castles—in the air?

We're often taught, it doth behove us
To think those greater, who're above us.
Another instance of my glory,

Who live above you, twice two story;
And from my garret can look down
On the whole street of *Arlington.**

Greatness by poets still is painted,
With many followers acquainted;
This too doth in my favour speak;
Your levee is but twice a week;
From mine I can exclude but one day,
My door is quiet on a Sunday.

Nor, in the manner of attendance,
Doth your great bard claim less ascendance.
Familiar you to admiration,
May be approached by all the nation;

While I, like the Mogul in *Indo*,
Am never seen but at my window.

If with my greatness you're offended,
The fault is easily amended;
For I'll come down, with wond'rous ease,
Into whatever *place* you please.

I'm not ambitious; little matters
Will serve us great, but humble creatures.
Suppose a secretary o' this Isle,
Just to be doing with a while;
Admiral, gen'ral, judge or bishop:
Or I can foreign treaties dish up.

If the good genius of the nation
Should call me to negotiation,

* Where Sir Robert lived.

Tuscan and *French* are in my head,
Latin I write, and *Greek*—I read.

If you should ask, what pleases best?
To get the most, and do the least.
What fittest for?—You know, I'm sure;
I'm fittest for——a *sine-cure*.

LE SAGE.

We must commence our biographical sketch of this delightful author, with the vain regret, that we can say little of his private life which can possibly interest the public. The distinguished men of genius, whom, after death, our admiration is led almost to canonize, have the lot of the holy men, who, spending their lives in obscurity, poverty, and maceration, incur contempt, and perhaps persecution, to have shrines built for the protection of their slightest relics, when once they are no more. Like the life of so many of those who have contributed most largely to the harmless enjoyments of mankind, that of Le Sage was laborious, obscure, and supported with difficulty by the reward of his literary exertions.

Alain Rene Le Sage was born in a village near to the town of Vannes, in Brittany, about the year 1668. The profession of his father is not mentioned; but as he bequeathed some property to his son, he could not be of a very low rank. Unfortunately he died early, and his son fell under the tutelage of an uncle, so negligent of one of the most sacred duties of humanity, that he neglected alike the fortune and education of his ward. The latter defect was, in a great measure, supplied by the affection of the pere Bochard, of the order of Jesuits, principal of the col-

lege of Vannes, who, interested in the talents displayed by the young Le Sage, took pleasure in cultivating his taste for literature. Our author, however, must have been late in attracting Bochard's notice: for when he came to Paris in 1693, in his twenty-fifth year his principal object was to prosecute his philosophical studies, with what ultimate view does not appear.

With good humour and liveliness, joined to youth, and, it is said, a remarkably handsome person, Le Sage soon felt the influence of the Parisian atmosphere, was much engaged in society, and distinguished by an intrigue with a woman of rank, who shared with him, as his biographer expresses it, her heart and fortune. How this amour terminated, we are not told, but one of a better and more virtuous character succeeded. Le Sage became enamoured of a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a joiner in the rue de la Mortellerie, married her, and, from that period, found his principal happiness in domestic affection. By this union he had three sons, whose fortunes we shall afterwards have occasion to mention, and a daughter, whose filial piety is said to have placed her sole occupation in contributing to the domestic enjoyment of her celebrated parent.

Le Sage continued, after his marriage, to frequent the circles of Paris, where literary men mingled as guests upon easy terms, and appears to have acquired several sincere and active friends, among whom the abbe de Lyonne entitled himself not only to the

author's personal gratitude,* but to that of posterity. He settled upon Le Sage a pension of 600 liv., and made him, besides, many valuable presents, yet served him much more essentially by directing his attention to Spanish literature, which he was afterwards so singularly to combine with that of his own country. †

The particular circumstances of Spain had given a strong cast of originality to the character of their literature. The close neighbourhood of so many petty kingdoms, so frequently engaged in intestine wars, occasioned numerous individual adventures, which could not have taken place under any one established government. The high romantic character of chivalry which was cherished by the natives, the vicinity of the Moors, who had imported with them the wild, imaginative, and splendid fictions of Araby the blessed—the fierceness of the Spanish passions of love and vengeance, their thirst of honour, their unsparing cruelty, placed all the materials of romance under the very eye of the author, who wished to use them. If his characters were gigantic and overstrained in the conception, the writer had his apology in the tem-

* Danchel, a man of some celebrity, engaged Le Sage in a translation of the *Letters of Aristenetus*, which he caused to be printed at Chartres (though the title bears Rotterdam) in 1695.

† So early as 1704, Le Sage understood the language so well, as to give a translation of Avellaneda's *Continuation of Don Quixote*, which gave so much offence to Cervantes.

per of the nation where his scene was laid; if his incidents were extravagant and improbable, a country in which Castilians and Arragonese, Spaniards and Moors, Mussulmans and Christians, had been at war for so many ages, could furnish historians with real events, which might countenance the boldest flights of the romance. And here it is impossible to avoid remarking, that the French, the gayest people in Europe, have formed their stage on a plan of declamatory eloquence, which all other nations have denounced as intolerable, while the Spaniard, grave, solemn, and stately, was the first to introduce on the stage all the bustle of lively and and complicated intrigue—the flight and the escape, the mask and ladder of ropes, closets, dark lanterns, trap-doors, and the whole machinery of constant and hurried action; and that with such a profusion of invention, that the Spanish theatre forms a mine in which the dramatic authors of almost all other countries have wrought for ages, and are still working, with very slight chance either of failure or detection.

Le Sage was not slow in endeavouring to turn to his own advantage his acquaintance with the Spanish drama. He translated from the original of Don Francisco de Rojas, *Le Traitre Puni.* It was not acted, but printed in the year 1700. Another play, *Don Felix de Mendoce*, he translated from Lope de Vega, but this also remained unacted, and was not even printed, until the author published his *Theatre*, in 1739.

Le Point d' Honneur, another translation from the Spanish, was performed at the Theatre Francais, in 1702, without success. The satire turned upon the pedantic punctilios formerly annexed to the discussion of personal "dependencies," as they were called, when men quarrelled by the book, and arranged a rencontre according to the rules of logic. This fantastic humour, which, so early as the age of Shakspeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, had been successfully ridiculed on the English stage, was probably rather too antiquated to be the subject of satire on that of Paris, in the beginning of the 18th century. The *Point of Honour* was only twice represented.

In 1707, *Don Cæsar Ursin*, a comedy translated by Le Sage from the Spanish of Calderon, was acted and condemned at the Theatre Francais. To make the author some amends, the same audience received, with the most marked applause, the lively farce entitled *Crispin Rival de son Maitre*, which Garrick introduced upon the English stage, under the title of *Neck or Nothing*. It is uncommon for a dramatic author to be applauded and condemned for two different pieces in the same day; but Le Sage's destiny was even still more whimsical. *Don Cæsar*, we have said, was hissed in the city, and *Crispin* applauded. At a representation before the court, the judgment was reversed—the play was applauded, and the farce condemned without mercy. Time has confirmed the judgment of the Parisians, and annulled that of Versailles.

Le Sage made yet another essay on the regular stage, with his comedy of *Turcaret*, in which he has painted the odious, yet ridiculous character of a financier, risen from the lowest order of society by tricks and usury, prodigal of his newly acquired wealth upon a false and extravagant mistress of quality, and refusing to contribute even to relieve the extreme necessity of his wife and near relations. As men of business, and a class so wealthy, the financiers have always posessed interest at court, and that interest seems to have been exerted with success to prevent so odious a personification of their body from appearing on the stage. The embargo was removed by an order of Monseigneur, dated October 15, 1708. While the play was yet in his port-folio, Le Sage had an opportunity to show how little his temper was that of a courtier. He had been pressed to read his manuscript comedy at the Hotel de Bouillon, at the hour of noon, but was detained till two o' clock by the necessity of attending the decision of a law-suit in which he was deeply interested. When he at length appeared, and endeavoured to plead his excuse, the Duchess of Bouillon received his apology with coldness, haughtily remarking, that he had made the company lose two hours in waiting for his arrival.—"It is easy to make up the loss, Madam," replied Le Sage; "I will not read my comedy, and you will thus regain the lost time." He left the hotel, and could never be prevailed on to return thither.

Turcaret was acted, and was successful, in spite of

the cabal formed against it by the exertions of those concerned in the finances. The author, in imitation of Moliere, added a sort of dramatic criticism, in which he defended the piece against the censures which had been passed against it. The speakers in this critical interlude were Don Cleofas and the Diable Boituex. They appeared on the stage as unseen spectators of the representation of *Turcaret*, and spoke between the acts, like the assistants in Ben Jonson's "Every man out of his Humour;" the tendency of the dialogue being to exult in the author's success, and ridicule the cabal by which it had been assailed. We learn, in the course of their conversation, that, besides all the friends of the author, and all his friend's friends, a gaurd of the police was necessary to restrain the zeal of the clerks and dependants of the financial department. Asmodeus maintains his character as a satirist, and, pointing out to Don Cleofas a violent debate betwixt the friends and enemies of the piece, observes, that as it becomes warm, the one party spoke worse of the piece than they thought, and the other thought less good of it than they uttered.

Turcaret seems the only original piece which Le Sage composed on the plan of the French regular comedy; and though it had great poignancy of satire, the principal character on which the whole turns is almost too worthless and too wicked to be ridiculous, or truly comic. Indeed *Turcaret* is rendered so odious, that revenge was said to have held the pallet when

the colours were mixed; and there was an unauthorized story at one time current, that Le Sage, deprived by a financier of a place in the revenue, had written this dramatic satire to be revenged upon the whole body of *Maltotiers*. The author, probably was not without some offers of preferment, for he used to speak to his son of having *refused* situations in which others became rich, but where his conscience must have kept him poor—expressions too vague for a biographer to found any thing upon them, yet which seem to exclude the idea of his having held any employment under a farmer-general of the revenues. His connexion with the Theatre Francais, on which alone such regular pieces can be presented, was soon afterwards broken off. Le Sage had offered to them, in 1708, a small piece, in one act, called *La Tontine;* it was not acted until 1732; and though the cause is not precisely known, it is obvious that the rejection gave much offence to the author. Le Sage was also much provoked at the airs of superiority assumed by the performers towards the authors, which he has revenged by the unfavourable and ridiculous colours in which he has represented the theatrical profession in his romances.

The truth seems, to be, that his former attempts were unsuccessful, because they were founded upon the Spanish plan of intrigue, in incident and situation, and were not, therefore, much valued by the Parisians, whom the excellent Moliere had accustomed to pieces of character and sentiment. *Turcaret* was,

indeed, more in the taste of the age, and was accordingly better relished; but the scenes hang so loosely together, and the plot possesses so little interest of any kind, that it may be termed rather a dramatic satire than a proper comedy. On the whole, Le Sage's failure as a comic poet will not excite the surprise of those who may have patience to peruse his plays.

For the sake of connexion, we may trace Le Sage's dramatic career to a period, with the greater brevity, that it contains but little to interest the reader. From the service of the established National Theatre, Le Sage transferred his pen to those of minor establishments, termed *De la Foire*, which did not pretend, and, indeed, were not permitted, to offer to the public regular dramas, but only to act vaudeville, or small light interludes set to music, and where the music was supposed to be the principal attraction.

These subordinate theatres were a refinement upon the puppet-shows, and such like exhibitions, which used to be shown during the two great fairs of St. Laurence and St. Germain; and it was under this colour that the manager and actors of the *Foire* endeavoured to elude the monopoly enjoyed by the Theatre Francais, and were alternately indulged or restricted in their privileges as they were able to find protection at court. The sort of pieces represented at the *Foire*, came at length to bear the name of the Comic Opera, of which Le Sage was the soul. He composed either entirely, or with the assistance of his friends, Dominique and Fuselier, no less than a hun-

dred and upwards of these interludes, farces, and light pieces, which cost little effort to so inventive a genius, and which floated or sunk, as popular opinion willed it, never omitting any opportunity which presented itself, to ridicule, parody, and satirize the *Romans*, for so the actors of the regular theatres were termed, in the cant language of the *Foire*. These exertions were attended with such a degree of profit, as, with the revenue arising from his other publications, enabled Le Sage, now the father of a family, to maintain himself and them in a calm, modest, but comfortable independence.

In 1721, the Comic Opera of the *Foire*, was for a time suppressed. An attempt was made to continue the amusement, and elude the restriction, under different devices. For this purpose, Francisque, the manager, for whom Le Sage had long laboured, caused pieces, composed in monologue, to be acted on his stage. Le Sage and Fuselier, late the allies of Francisque, had recourse to another device, and acted their pieces as formerly, in music and dialogue, but by the intervention of puppets, instead of real actors —an idea which afterwards occurred to Fielding. These rival theatres carried on their several undertakings, in spite both of the comedians of the Theatre Francais, and of each other, and some satirical skirmishes passed between them. In *Arlequin Deucalion*, a piece in monologue, written by the celebrated Piron, Le Sage, and his consort Fuselier are subjected to rridicule by the following *jeu de mots:* Punchinello is made to

ask, "*Pourquoi le fol de temps en temps ne dirait-il pas des bonnes choses, puisque* LE SAGE *de temps en temps dit de si mauvaises?*" In the same piece Arlequin throws a pair of pistols into the sea, praying that there might never more be spoken, "*de pistolets, de fusil, ni de* FUSELIER." Such jests break no bones, and probably discomposed our author's temper as little as they injured his reputation. The embargo was removed from the performances at the *Foire*, in the course of about two years, and our author resumed his ordinary labours in behalf of its theatre, which he continued so late as the year 1738, during which he produced three pieces, which were probably his last dramatic efforts, as he had then attained his seventeenth year.

It has been said of Le Sage's works, that no writings are more generally and widely known than those of his which are remembered, while none are so decidedly and utterly forgotten as those which have been consigned to neglect. All the slight dramas which we have noticed, as forming so great and essential a part of the labours of his life, fall under the latter class—many have never been printed, and of those which have issued from the press very few are now read. Nothing can be more slight than their texture. The whim of the day—any remarkable accident—any popular publication, affords a hint for the story. The airs, like those of the *Beggar's opera*, are founded on the common popular ballads and vaudevilles, and nothing is too trivial or absurd to be admitted into the dialogue. At the same time, there occur touches both

of wit, nature, and humour; as how could it be otherwise in the slightest works of Le Sage? The French critics, who are indisputably the best judges, incline to think, judging from Turcaret, that he would have risen to eminence, had he continued to cultivate the regular comedy, instead of sinking into an occupation which he held in contempt, and which he probably thought could not be too slightly executed. *Don Cleofas*, in the *Critque de Turcaret*, says to Asmodeus, as they survey the audience at the *Theatre Francais*, "*La belle assemblee; que de dames!*" ASMODEE. *Il y en aurait encore davantage sans les spectacles de la foirae. Le plupart des femmes y courent avec fureur. Je suis ravi de les voir dans le gout de leurs laquais et de leurs cochers.*"—Thus thought Le Sage originally of the dignity of those labours in which he was to spend his life, and the indifference with which he was contented to exercise his vocation, shows that his opinion of its importance was never enhanced. Goldoni, in circumstances nealy similar, created a national drama, and a taste for its beauties; but Le Sage was to derive an undying name from works of a different description.

We willingly leave consideration of these ephemeral and forgotten effusions of the moment, composed for the small theatres of the *foire*, to speak of the productions which must afford delight and interest, so long as human nature retains its present constitution. The first of these was *Le Diable Boiteux*, which Le Sage published in 1707; the title and plan of the work was derived from the Spanish of Luezo Velez

de Guevara, called *El Diable Cojuelo*, and such satires on manners as had been long before written, in Spain, by Cervantes and others. But the fancy, the lightness, the spirit, the wit, and the vivacity of the *Diable Boiteux*, were entirely communicated by the enchanting pen of the lively Frenchman. The plan of the work was in the highest degree interesting, and having in its original concoction, at once a cast of the romantic and of the mystical, is calculated to interest and to attract, by its own merit, as well as by the pleasing anecdotes and shrewd remarks upon human life, of which it forms, as it were, the framework, and enchasing. The Mysteries of the Cabalists afforded a foundation for the story, which, grotesque as it is, was not in those times held to exceed the bounds of probable fiction ; and the interlocutors of the scene are so happily adapted to the subjects of their conversation, that all they say and do has its own portion of natural appropriation.

It is impossible to conceive a being more fitted to comment upon the vices, and to ridicule the follies of humanity, than an *esprit follet* like Asmodeus, who is as much a decided creation of genius, in his way, as Ariel or Caliban. Without possessing the darker powers and propensities of a fallen angel, he presides over the vices and the follies, rather than the crimes of mankind, is malicious rather than malignant ; and his delight is to gibe, and to scoff, and to teaze, rather than to torture ; one of Satan's light infantry, in short, whose business it is to goad, perplex, and dis-

turb the ordinary train of society, rather than to break in upon and overthrow it. This character is maintained in all Asmodeus says and does, with so much spirit, wit, acuteness, and playful malice, that we never forget the fiend, even in those moments when he is very near becoming amiable as well as entertaining.

Don Cleofas, to whom he makes all his diverting communications, is a fiery young Spaniard, proud, high-spirited, and revengeful, and just so much of a libertine as to fit him for the company of Asmodeus. He interests us personally by his gallantry and generous sentiments; and we are pleased with the mode in which the grateful fiend provides for the future happiness of his liberator. Of these two characters neither is absolutely original. But the devil of Guevara is, as the title of the book expresses, a mere bottle-conjurer, who amuses the student by tricks of legerdemain, intermixed with strokes of satire, some of them very acute, but devoid of the poignancy of Le Sage. Don Cleofas is a mere literal copy from the Spanish author. There is no book in existence in which so much of the human character, under all its various shades and phases, is described in so few words as in the *Diable Boiteux*. Every page, every line, bears marks of that sure tact, and accurate development of human weakness and folly, which tempt us to think we are actually listening to a superior intelligence, who sees into our minds and motives, and, in malicious sport, tears away the veil which we endeavour to interpose betwixt these and our actions.

The satire of Le Sage is as quick and as sudden as it is poignant; his jest never is blunted by anticipation; ere we are aware that the bow is drawn, the shaft is quivering in the very centre of the mark. To quote examples would be to quote the work through almost every page; and, accordingly, no author has afforded a greater stock of passages, which have been generally employed as apothegms, or illustrations of human nature and actions; and no wonder, since the force of whole pages is often compressed in fewer words than another author would have employed sentences. To take the first example that comes: the fiends of Profligacy and of Chicane contend for possession and direction of a young Parisian. Pillardoc would have made him a *commis*, Asmodeus a debauchee. To unite both their views, the infernal conclave made the youth a *monk*, and effected a reconciliation between their contending brethren. "We embraced," says Asmodeus, "and have been mortal enemies ever since." It is well observed by a late editor of Le Sage's works, that the traits of this kind, with which the *Diable Boiteux* abounds, entitle it, much more than the Italian scenes of Gherardi, to the title of the *Grenier a sel*, conferred on the latter work by the sanction of Boileau. That great poet, nevertheless, is said to have been of a different opinion. He threatened to dismiss a valet whom he found in the act of reading the *Diable Boiteux*. Whether this proceeded from the peevishness of indisposition, under which Boileau laboured in 1707; whether he

supposed the knowledge of human life, and all its chicanery, to be learned from Le Sage's satire, was no safe accomplishment for a domestic; or whether, finally, he had private or personal causes for condemning the work and the author, is not known. But the anecdote forms one example, amongst the many, of the unjust estimation in which men of genius are too apt to hold their contemporaries.

Besides the power of wit and satire displayed in the *Diable Boiteux*, with so much brilliancy, there are passages in which the author assumes a more serious and moral tone; he sometimes touches upon the pathetic, and sometimes even approaches the sublime. The personification of Death is of the latter character, until we come to the point where the authors humour breaks forth, and where, having described one of the terrific phantom's wings as painted with war, pestilence, famine, and shipwreck, he adorns the other with the representation of young physicians taking their degree.

To relieve the reader from the uniformity which might otherwise have attached to the hasty and brief sketches of what is only subjected to the eye, Le Sage has introduced several narratives in the Spanish taste, such as the History of the Count de Belflor, and the novel called the Force of Friendship. Cervantes had set the example of varying a long narrative by the introduction of such novels, or *historiettes*. Scarron and others had followed the example, but with less propriety than Le Sage, since it must be owned, that

in a work of which the parts are so unconnected with each other, as in the *Diable Boiteux*, such relief is more appropriate than when the novel serves unartificially to interrupt the progress of a principal story.

The immediate popularity of the *Diable Boiteux* was increased at the time of publication, by the general belief that Le Sage, who lived so much in the world, and was so close an observer of what passed around him, had, under Spanish names, and with fictitious circumstances, recounted many Parisian anecdotes, and drawn many characters of the court and city. Some of these were immediately recognized. The spendthrift Dufrensy (supposed to be a descendant of Henry IV. by his grandmother, a female called *la Belle Jardiniere d'Anet*) was recognized as the old bachelor of rank, who married his laundress to get rid of her claim. The story of the German baroness, who curled her hair with the promise of marriage made to her by an ardent but imprudent lover, relates to a similar anecdote of the celebrated Ninon de l'Enclos. Baron, the celebrated actor, is the dramatic hero, who dreams that the gods had decreed him an apotheosis, by transforming him into a stage-decoration. The celebrated Helvetius was generally supposed to be the original of the sage Sangrado; and, doubtless, other individuals of the faculty, which Le Sage, like Molicre, persecuted with his raillery, were also known. The satire of both authors flowed, perhaps, more freely, that each of them enjoyed a state of good health, which enabled them to set the Facul-

ty at defiance, and also because the professional recompense of physicians, on the continent, was so mean as to degrade their character in society, and subject them to all the ridicule which, since the days of Juvenal has attached to learning in rags.

Besides the personal allusions which we have noticed, there are, doubtless, many others in the novel, which might be easily understood at the time: and the rage for private scandal probably carried the spirit of applying passages in the work to existing persons and circumstances much farther than the writer intended.

The popularity of the *Diable Boiteux* was unbounded at its first appearance, nor has it ever since been abated. The strongest proof of the ardour with which it was received was, that two young men entering the same bookseller's shop, in which there chanced to be only one copy of the work, contested the possession of it, by fighting upon the spot, and the victor, having wounded his antagonist, carried off the volume as the prize of the field. Certainly this well-attested anecdote, to which the popularity of Asmodeus gave occasion, deserved to be recorded by the demon himself. One Dancourt, also a dramatist, who supplied his deficiencies of genius and invention by his promptitude in seizing every topic of popular interest, brought the subject of the *Diable Boiteux* on the stage, in two parts; the first of which ran for thirty-five nights, the second for seventy-two.

It only remains to be said of this celebrated moral

satire, that nineteen years after it had appeared in a single volume, the author published it with augmentations, which increased the work to two. This addition had the usual fate of continuations, and was not at the time, considered as equal to the original publication; but it would now be difficult to perceive any difference between them. The dialogues of the chimneys of Madrid, which were for the first time appended to the *Diable Boiteux*, in the new edition just mentioned, were most justly censured as inferior to that celebrated work. The personification itself is a very awkward one, and forms a singular contrast to the unrivalled contrivance by which Don Cleofas acquires the knowledge of the interior of the dwellings of men, and even of the secrets of their bosoms.

The first three volumes of *Gil Blas de Santillane*, comprehending the life of that most excellent person, down to his first retreat to Lirias, raised the fame of Le Sage to the highest pitch, and secured it upon an immoveable basis. Few have ever read this charming book without remembering, as one of the most delightful occupations of their life, the time which they first employed in the perusal; and there are few also who do not occasionally turn back to its pages with all the vivacity which attends the recollection of early love. It signifies nothing at what time we have first encountered the fascination; whether in boyhood when we were chiefly captivated by the cavern of the robbers, and other scenes of romance; whether in more advanced youth, but while our ignorance of

the world yet concealed from us the subtle and poignant satire which lurks in so many passages of the work; whether we were learned enough to apprehend the various allusions to history and public matters with which it abounds, or ignorant enough to rest contented with the more direct course of the narration. The power of the enchanter over us is alike absolute, under all these circumstances. If there is any thing like truth in Gray's opinion, that to lie upon a couch and read new novels was no bad idea of Paradise, how would that beatitude be enhanced, could human genius afford us another Gil Blas!

Le Sage's claim to originality, in this delightful work, has been idly, I had almost said ungratefully, contested by those critics, who conceive they detect a plagiarist wherever they see a resemblance in the general subject of a work to one which has been before treated by an inferior artist. It is a favourite theme of laborious dulness, to trace out such coincidences, because they appear to reduce genius of the higher order to the usual standard of humanity, and, of course, to bring the author nearer a level with his critics. It is not the mere outline of a story—not even the adopting some details of a former author, which constitutes the literary crime of plagiarism. The proprietor of the pit from which Chantrey takes his clay, might as well pretend to a right in the figure into which it is moulded under his plastic fingers, and the question is in both cases the same—not so much

from whom the original rude substance came as to whom owes it that which constitutes its real merit and excellence.

It is, therefore, no disparagement to Le Sage, that long before his time there existed in other countries, and particularly in Spain, that species of fiction to which *Gil Blas* may be, in some respects, said to belong. There arises, in every country, a species of low or comic romance, bearing somewhat the same proportion to the grave or heroic romance, which farce bears to tragedy. Readers of all countries are not more, if indeed they are equally delighted, with the perusal of high deeds of war and chivalry, achieved by some hero of popular name, than with the exploits of some determined freebooter, who follows his illicit trade by violence, or of some notorious sharper, who preys upon society by address and stratagem. The lowness of such men's character, and the baseness of their pursuits, does not prevent their hazards, their successes, their failures, their escapes, and their subsequent fate, from being deeply interesting, not to the mere common people only, but to all who desire to read a chapter in the great book of human nature. We may use, though not in a moral sense, the oft quoted phrase of Terence, and acknowledge ourselves interested in the tale, because *we* are *men*, and the events are *human*.

In Spain, many of their most ingenious men took pleasure in making studies from low life, as their countrymen, Murillo, found the favourite subjects of

his pencil among the sun-burnt gypsies, shepherds and muleteers. Thus the character of the *Picaro*, or Adventurer, had been long a favourite subject in Spanish fiction. *Lazarillo de Tormes* had been written by Juan de Luna; the *History of Paul the Sharper*, by the celebrated Quevedo. Even Cervantes had touched upon such a subject in the novel of *Riconete and Cortadillo*, in which there are some scenes of low life drawn with all the force of his powerful pen. But *Guzman d' Alfarache* was the most generally known of any of the class, and had been long since translated into most European languages. If *Gil Blas'* history had a prototype among these Spanish stories, it must have probably been in that of Guzman; and some slight resemblance may be discovered betwixt some of the incidents; for instance, the circumstances in which Guzman is about to marry the daughter of a wealthy Genoese, and that of the excellent Don Raphael, in the house of Pedro de Moyadas. In like manner, the incident of that worthy assuming the dress of a dead hermit, is anticipated by Lazarillo de Tormes, in the second part of his history; and probably many other resemblances, or, if the reader pleases to call them so, plagiarisms, might be pointed out; for, as the author furnished the plots of his dramatic pieces very often at the expense of the Spaniards, there is no probability that he would scruple to borrow from their romances whatever he found suitable to his own purpose.

There has been, indeed, an unauthenticated account of Le Sage having obtained possession of some manuscripts of Cervantes', which he had used liberally, and without acknowledgment, in the construction of his *Gil Blas*. A translation of Le Sage's novels into Spanish, bears also, on the title-page, the vaunt, that this operation has restored them to the language in which they were originally written. But the styles of Cervantes and Le Sage are so essentially different, though each in itself is masterly, that, in the absence of positive evidence, one would as soon be induced to believe that the Frenchman wrote *Don Quixote*, as that the Spaniard composed *Gil Blas*. If Le Sage borrowed any thing from Spain, excepting some general hints, such as we have noticed, it may have been some of the detached novels, which, as in the *Diable Boiteux*, are interwoven in the history, though with less felicity than in the earlier publication, where they do not interrupt the march of any principal narrative. On the other hand, it is no doubt wonderful, that, merely by dint of acquaintance with Spanish literature, Le Sage should have become so perfectly intimate, as he is admitted to be on all hands, with the Spanish customs, manners and habits, so as to conduct his reader through four volumes, without once betraying the secret, that the work was not composed by a native of Spain. Indeed, it is chiefly on this wonderful observation of costume and national manners, that the Spanish translator founds his reclamation of the work, as the original property of

Spain. Le Sage's capacity of identifying himself with the child of his imagination, in circumstances in which he himself never was placed, though rare in the highest degree, is not altogether singular; De Foe, in particular, possessed it in a most extraordinary degree. It may be added, that this strict and accurate attention to costume is confined to externals, so far as the principal personage is concerned. Gil Blas, though wearing the *golillo*, *capa*, and *spada*, with the most pure Castilian grace, thinks and acts with all the vivacity of a Frenchman, and displays, in many respects, the peculiar sentiments of one.

The last French editor of Le Sage's works thinks that *Gil Blas* may have had a prototype in the humorous but licentious *History of Francion*, written by the Sieur Moulinet de Parc. I confess I cannot see any particular resemblance which the *History of Gil Blas* has to that work, excepting that the scene of both lies chiefly in ordinary life, as may be said of the *Roman Comique* of Scarron. The whole concoction of *Gil Blas* appears to me as original, in that which constitutes the essence of a composition, as it is inexpressibly delightful.

The principal character, in whose name and with whose commentaries the story is told, is a conception which has never been equalled in fictitious composition, yet which seems so very real, that we cannot divest ourselves of the opinion, that we listen to the narrative of one who has really gone through the scenes of which he speaks to us. Gil Blas' character has all

the weaknessess and inequalities proper to human nature, and which we daily recognize in our acquaintances. He is not by nature such a witty sharper as the Spaniards painted in the characters of Paolo or Guzman, and such as Le Sage himself has embodied in the subordinate sketch of Scipio, but is naturally disposed towards honesty, though with a mind unfortunately too ductile to resist the temptations of opportunity or example. He is constitutionally timid, and yet occasionally capable of doing brave actions; shrewd and intelligent, but apt to be deceived by his own vanity; with wit enough to make us laugh with him at others, and follies enough to turn the jest frequently against himself. Generous, good-natured and humane, he has virtues sufficient to make us love him, and, as to respect, it is the last thing which he asks at his reader's hand. Gil Blas, in short, is the principal character in a moving scene, where, though he frequently plays a subordinate part in the action, all that he lays before us is coloured with his own opinions, remarks, and sensations. We feel the individuality of Gil Blas alike in the caverns of the robbers, in the episcopal palace of the archbishop of Grenada, in the bureau of the minister, and in all the various scenes through which he conducts us so delightfully, and which are, generally speaking, very slightly connected together, or rather, no otherwise related to each other than as they are represented to have happened to the same man. In this point of view, the romance is one which rests on character

rather than incident; but although there is no main action whatsoever, yet there is so much incident in the episodical narratives, that the work can never be said to linger or hang heavy.

The son of the squire of Asturias is entrusted also with the magic wand of the *Diable Boiteux*, and can strip the gilding from human actions with the causticity of Asmodeus himself. Yet, with all this power of satire, the moralist has so much of gentleness and good-humour, that it may be said of Le Sage, as of Horace, *Circum præcordia ludit.* All is easy and good-humoured, gay, light, and lively; even the cavern of the robbers is illuminated with a ray of that wit with which Le Sage enlightens his whole narrative. It is a work which renders the reader pleased with himself and with mankind, where faults are placed before him in the light of follies rather than vices, and where misfortunes are so interwoven with the ludicrous, that we laugh in the very act of sympathising with them. All is rendered diverting—both the crimes and the retribution which follows them. Thus, for example, Gil Blas, during his prosperity, commits a gross act of filial undutifulness and ingratitude; yet we feel, that the intermediation of Master Muscada the grocer, irritating the pride of a *parvenu*, was so exactly calculated to produce the effect which it operated, that we continue to laugh with and at Gil Blas, even in the sole instance in which he shows depravity of heart. And then, the lapidation which he undergoes at Oviedo, with the disappointment in all

his ambitious hopes of exciting the admiration of the inhabitants of his birth-place, is received as an expiation completely appropriate, and suited to the offence. In short, so strictly are the pages of *Gil Blas* confined to that which is amusing, that they might perhaps have been improved by some touches of a more masculine, stronger, and firmer line of morality.

It ought not to escape notice, that Le Sage, though like Cervantes, he considers the human figures which he paints as his principal object, fails not to relieve them by exquisite morsels of landscape, slightly touched indeed, but with the highest keeping, and the most marked effect. The description of the old hermit's place of retreat may be given as an example of what we mean.

In the *History of Gil Blas* is also exhibited that art of fixing the attention of the reader, and creating, as it were, a reality even in fiction itself, not only by a strict attention to costume and locality, but by a minuteness, and, at the same time, a vivacity of detail, comprehending many trifling circumstances which might be thought to have escaped every one's memory, excepting that of an actual eye-witness. By such a circumstantial detail the author has rendered us as well acquainted with the four pavilions, and *corps-de-logis* of Lirias, as if we had ourselves dined there with Gil Blas and his faithful follower Scipio. The well-preserved tapestry, as old as the Moorish kingdom of Valencia, the old-fashioned damask chairs—that furniture of so little intrinsic value, which yet

made, in its proper place, such a respectable appearance—the dinner, the siesta—all give that closing scene in the third volume such a degree of reality, and assure us so completely of the comfort and happiness of our pleasant companion, that the concluding chapters, in which the hero is dismissed, after his labours and dangers, to repose and happiness—these very chapters, which in other novels are glanced over as a matter of course, are perhaps the most interesting in the *Adventures of Gil Blas.* Not a doubt remains on the mind of the reader concerning the continuance of the hero's rural felicity, unless he should happen (like ourselves) to feel some private difficulty in believing that the new cook from Valencia could ever rival Master Joachims's excellence, particularly in the matter of the olla podrida, and the pig's ears marinated. Indeed, to the honour of that author be it spoken, Le Sage, excellent in describing scenes of all kinds, gives such vivacity to those which interest the *gastronome* in particular, that an epicure of our acquaintance used to read certain favourite passages regularly before dinner, with the purpose of getting an appetite like that of the licentiate Sedillo, and so far as his friends could observe, the recipe was always successful.

At this happy point the *Adventurers of Gil Blas* originally closed; but the excessive popularity of the work induced the author to add the fourth volume, in which Gil Blas is again brought from his retreat, and of new involved in the perils of a court life. Besides

that the author in some degree repeats himself—for Gil Blas situation under the Conde d'Olivarez is just the counterpart to that which he held under the Duke of Lerma—the continuation has the usual fault of such works, joins awkwardly with the original story, and is written evidently with less vigour and originality. Its reception from the public, according to a French critic, resembled the admiration given to a decaying beauty, whose features remain the same, though their freshness and brilliancy are abated by time.

Even after the death of Le Sage, it seemed as if his masterpiece was to give rise to as many continuations as the *History of Amadis*. A spurious *History of Don Alphonso Blas de Lirias, son of Gil Blas de Santillane*; pretending to be a posthumous work of the original author, appeared at Amsterdam, and has been since reprinted.

In 1717, Le Sage published a translation, or rather a poor imitation, of Boiardo's *Orlando Inamorato*, which wild and imaginative poem he has degraded into a mere fairy tale, stripping it effectually of the magical colouring which it had received from the original writer. The author intended to have committed the same violence upon Ariosto's splendid epic, but fortunately the consummation of the rash attempt did not take place. The ingenious and lively Frenchman was as completely devoid of the rich poetical fancy of the Tuscan poet, as the language in which he wrote

was inadequate to express the beauties of the Italian original.

Le Sage found a more congenial employment in compiling the adventures of the *Chevalier de Beauchene*, a brave sea-officer, or rather corsair—the Paul Jones of that period, in the West Indian seas. He professed to have derived the materials of this work, which was never completed, from the widow of the chevalier, who resided at Tours. Le Sage has well supported the character of the frank, bold, half-civilized sailor, but apparently found the task troublesome, if we may judge from the numerous episodes which he has ingrafted on the principal story. Probably the work did not become popular, for though a continuation was in some degree promised, it never appeared. The *Chevalier de Beauchene*, appeared in 1732, and in the same year, Le Sage published a translation, or rather, an abridgement of the *Adventures of Guzman d'Alfarache*, the most celebrated of the Spanish romances *a la picaresque*.

In 1734, Le Sage translated the *History of Vanilla Gonzales, called the Merry Bachelor*, from the Spanish of Vincentio Espinella.

Apparently, these subordinate labours had renewed the authors taste for original composition. The *Bachelor of Salamanca* was his last work of this description; and although we can easily descry the flatness and insipidity which indicate the approach of age, and the decay of the finer powers of observation and expression, we are, nevertheless, ever and anon

reminded of that genius, which in its vigour, produced *Gil Blas* and the *Diable Boiteux*. The *Bachelor of Salamanca* is, in comparison, a failure, but such as Le Sage alone conld have committed; and many passages have all that raciness which distinguishes his happier productions. The scene, for example, in which Carambola is employed in reading to slumber the member of the council of the Indies, who unpitiably awakens at every instant when his reader stops to take a mouthful of refreshment, might have been told by Asmodeus himself. It must be owned that the scenes laid in Mexico have little merit of any kind. Le Sage had not the same accurate knowledge of the manners of New Spain which he possessed respecting those of the mother country, and the account with which he presents us is in proportion flat and uninteresting. If it be true that Le Sage, jealous, like other old authors, of the earlier productions of his genius preferred this work—the child of his old age, to his *Diable Boiteux* and *Gil Blas*, we can only say, that the same decay which is visible in his talents, must have also affected his taste, and that he certainly had not invoked the assistance of the acute Asmodeus when he formed his opinion.

After the *Bachelor of Salamanca*, Le Sage produced, in 1740, his last original work, *La Valise Trouvee*, which appeared anonymously in that year. His labours thus approached the character of those with which he opened his career; for the *Valise Trouvee* consists of a miscellaneous collection of letters upon

various subjects, resembling those of Aristarchus, translated by our author, in 1695.

A lively collection of Anecdotes and Witticisms, published in 1743, closed the long labours of this excellent author. They are told with all the animation of his own peculiar humour, and we may suppose them to have been amassed in his portfolio, with the purpose of being one day amalgamated into a regular work, but given to the public in their present unconnected form, when age induced Le Sage, now in his seventy-fifth-year, to lay aside his pen.

Having thus reviewed hastily the various literary labours of Le Sage, we have, in fact, nearly accomplished the history of his life, which appears to have been spent in the bosom of his family, and to have been diversified by no incident of peculiarity, unconnected with his theatrical and literary engagements. His taste for retirement was, perhaps, increased by the infirmity of deafness, which attacked him so early as 1709, for he alludes to it in the critical interlude on the subject of Turcaret. Latterly, it increased so much, that he was under the necessity of constantly using a hearing-trumpet. His conversation was nevertheless so delightful, that when he went to his favourite coffee-house, in the rue St. Jacques, the guests formed a circle round him, nay, even mounted upon the seats and upon the tables, in order to catch the remarks and anecdotes which this celebrated observer of human nature could tell, with the

same grace and effect with which he recorded them in his works.

Le Sage's circumstances, though very moderate, seem always to have been easy, and his domestic life was quiet and happy. Its tenor was somewhat interrupted by the taste which carried upon the stage his eldest and youngest son. Nothing could be more natural than that the theatrical art should have invincible charms for the sons of a dramatic author; but Le Sage, who had expressed the greatest contempt and dislike of that profession, which he had painted in the most ridiculous and odious colours, felt great pain from his sons' making choice of it, which probably was not lessened when the eldest obtained an honourable station among those very Romans of the Theatre Francais, with whom his father had waged, for so many years, a satirical war. This eldest son of Le Sage was a youth of great hopes, and a most amiable disposition. He had been educated for the bar. Upon embracing the profession of a comedian, he assumed the name of Montmenil, under which he became distinguished for his excellence in the parts of valets, peasants, and other characters in low comedy. He was not less remarked for the excellence of his private character, and his talents for society: and, having early attained a situation in the Theatre Francais, he mixed with the best company in Paris. Yet his father could not, for a long time, hear of Montmenil's professional merit, or even of his private virtues, and the general respect in which he was held,

without showing evident symptoms of great and painful emotion. At length a reconciliation was effected betwixt them, and, passing from displeasure to the most affectionate excess of parental fondness, it is said Le Sage could scarce bear to be seperated from the son whose name he had hardly permitted to be mentioned before him. The death of Montmenil, which happened on the 8th of Sept. 1743, in consequence of a cold caught at a hunting party, was such a blow to his father, then far advanced in life, that it determined his total retirement from Paris, and from the world.

The third son of our author also became a player, under the name of Pittenec; and it seems he was also a dramatic author, but made no distinguished figure in either capacity.

On the other hand, Le Sage's second son showed a more staid character than either of his brothers, became a student of theology, and took orders. By the patronage of the queen (wife of Louis XV.) he became a canon of the cathedral of Boulogne, and had the benefit of a pension. The moderate independence which he enjoyed, enabled him, after his father had been entirely broken down in spirits, by the death of Montmenil, to receive both him, his sister, and his mother, under his roof, and to provide for them during the residue of their lives. The sister (who has not been mentioned before) was eminent for her filial tenderness, and dedicated her life to the comfort of her parents.

It was after his retreat to Boulogne, and while residing under the roof of his son, the canon, that we obtain an interesting account of Le Sage, then extremely aged, from the pen of the Compte de Tressan, to whom the ancient romances of France owe the same favour which has been rendered to those of England by the late ingenious and excellent George Ellis. The reader will feel interested in receiving the communication in the words of the count himself.

"PARIS, January 20, 1783.

"You have requested from me some account of the concluding period of the celebrated author of *Gil Blas.* Here follow the few anecdotes which I am able to furnish.

"In the end of the year 1745, after the battle of Fontenoy, the late king having named me to serve under the Marechal de Richlieu, I received counter-orders at Boulogne, and remained there, commandant of the Boulonois, Poitou, and Picardy.

"Having learned that Monsieur Le Sage, aged upwards of eighty years, with his wife nearly as old, resided at Boulogne, I was early desirous of visiting them, and of acquainting myself with their situation. I found that they lived in family with their son, a canon of the cathedral of Boulogne; and never was filial piety more tenderly occupied than his, in cheering and supporting the latter days of parents, who had scarce any other resource than the moderate revenue of the son.

"The Abbe Le Sage enjoyed the highest respect at Boulogne. His talents, his virtues, his social affections, rendered him dear to Monseigneur de Pressy, his worthy bishop, to his fraternity, and to the public.

"I have seen few resemblances more striking than that of the Abbe Le Sage to his brother Monsieur de Montmenil; he had even a portion of his talents, and of his most agreeable qualities. No one could read verses more agreeably. He possessed the uncommon art of that variation of tone, and of employing those brief pauses, which, without being actual declamation, impress on the hearers the sentiments and the beauties of the author.

"I had known, and I regretted M. Montmenil. I entertained esteem and friendship for his brother; and the late queen, in consequence of the account which I had to lay before her of the Abbe Le Sage's situation, and his narrow fortune, procured him a pension upon a benefice.

"I had been apprised not to go to visit Monsieur Le Sage till near the approach of noon; and the feelings of that old man made me observe, for a second time, the effect which the state of the atmosphere produces in the melancholy days of bodily decline.

"Monsieur Le Sage, awaking every morning so soon as the sun appeared some degrees above the horizon, became animated, acquired feeling and force in proportion as that planet approached the meridian; but as the sun began to decline, the sensibility of

the old man, the light of his intellect, and the activity of his bodily organs, began to diminish in proportion; and no sooner had the sun descended some degrees under the horizon, than he sunk into a lethargy, from which it was difficult to rouse him.

"I took care only to make my visit at that period of the day when his intellect was most clear, which was the hour after he had dined. I could not view without emotion, the respectable old man, who preserved the gaity and urbanity of his better years, and sometimes even displayed the imagination of the author of the *Diable Boiteux* and of *Turcaret*. But one day, having come more late than usual, I was sorry to see that his conversation began to resemble the last homilies of the bishop of Grenada, and I instantly withdrew.

"Monsieur Le Sage had become very deaf. I always found him seated near a table on which lay a large hearing-trumpet; that trumpet, which he sometimes snatched up with vivacity, remained unmoved on the table, when the nature of the visit which he received did not encourage him to hope for agreeable conversation. As I commanded in the province, I had the pleasure to see him always make use of it in conversation with me: and it was a lesson which prepared me to sustain the petulant activity of the hearing-trumpet of my dear and illustrious associate and friend, Monsieur de la Condamine.*

* M. de la Condamine, very deaf and very importunate, was

"Monsieur Le Sage died in winter, 1746-7. I considered it as an honour and duty to attend his funeral, with the principal officers under my command. His widow survived him but a short time; and a few years afterwards, the loss of the Abbe Le Sage became the subject of regret to his chapter, and the enlightened society to which he was endeared by his virtues."

The interesting account of Monsieur de Tressan having conducted Le Sage to an honoured tomb, we have but to add, that an epitaph, placed over his grave, expressed, in indifferent poetry, the honourable truth, that he was the friend of virtue rather than of fortune.* Indeed, when the giddy hours of youth were passed, his conduct seems to have been irreproachable; and if, in his works he has assailed vice rather with ridicule than with reproach, and has, at the same time conducted his story through scenes of pleasure and of license, his muse has moved with an unpolluted step, even where the path was somewhat miry. In short, it is highly to the honour of Le Sage, that—differing in that particular from many of his countrymen who have moved in the same walk of let-

the terror of the members of the Academie, from the vivacity with which he urged inquiries, which could only be satisfied by the inconvenient medium of his hearing-trumpet.

* Sous ce tombeau Le Sage abattu,
Par le ciseau de la Parque importune.
S'il ne fut pas ami de la Fortune,
Il fut toujours ami de la Vertu.

ters—he has never condescended to pander to vice by warmth or indelicacy of description. If Voltaire, as it is said, held the powers of Le Sage in low estimation, such slight regard was particularly misplaced towards one who, without awaking one evil thought, was able, by his agreeable fictions, to excite more lasting and more honourable interest than the witty lord of Ferney himself, even though Asmodeus sat at his elbow to aid him in composing *Candide* and *Zadig*.

SMOLLETT.

The life of Smollett, whose genius has raised an imperishable monument to his fame, has been written, with spirit and elegance, by his friend and contemporary, the celebrated Dr. Moore, and more lately by Dr. Robert Anderson, of Edinburgh, with a careful research, which leaves us little except the task of selection and abridgment.

Our author was descended from an ancient and honourable family, an advantage to which from various passages in his writings, he seems to have attached considerable weight, and the consciousness of which seems to have contributed its share in forming some of the peculiarities of his character.

Sir James Smollett, of Bonhill, the grandfather of the celebrated author, was bred to the bar, became one of the commissaries (i. e. consistorial judges) of Edinburgh, represented the burgh of Dunbarton in the Scotish parliament, and lent his aid to dissolve that representative body for ever, being one of the commissioners for framing the Union with England. By his lady, a daughter of Sir Aulay Mac Aulay, of Ardincaple, Sir James Smollett had four sons, of whom Archibald, the youngest, was father of the poet.

It appears that Archibald Smollett followed no

profession, and that, without his father's consent, he married an amiable woman, Barbara, daughter of Mr. Cunningham, of Gilbertfield. The disunion betwixt the son and father, to which this act of imprudence gave rise, did not prevent Sir James Smollett from assigning to him, for his support, the house and farm of Dalquhurn, near his own mansion of Bonhill. Archibald Smollett died early, leaving two sons and a daughter wholly dependent on the kindness of his grandfather. The eldest son embraced the military life, and perished by the shipwreck of a transport. The daughter, Jane, married Mr. Telfer, of Leadhills, and her descendant Captain John Smollett, R. N., now represents the family, and possesses the estate of Bonhill. The second son of Archibald Smollett is the subject of this memoir.

Tobias Smollett (baptized Tobias-George) was born in 1721, in the old house of Dalquhurn, in the valley of Leven, in perhaps, the most beautiful district in Britian. Its distinguished native has celebrated the vale of Leven, not only in the beautiful ode addressed to his parent stream, but in the expedition of *Humphrey Clinker*, where he mentions the home of his forefathers in the following enthusiastic, yet not exaggerated terms; "A very little above the source of the Leven, on the lake, stands the house of Cameron, belonging to Mr. Smollett,* so embosomed in an oak wood that we did not see it till we were with-

* The late Commissary Smollett

in fifty yards of the door. The lake approaches, on one side, to within six or seven yards of the window. It might have been placed in a higher situation, which would have afforded a more extensive prospect, and a drier atmosphere; but this imperfection is not chargeable on the present proprietor, who purchased it ready built, rather than be at the trouble of repairing his own family house of Bonhill, which stands two miles from hence, on the Leven, so surrounded with plantations, that it used to be known by the name of the mavis (or thrush) nest. Above that house is a romantic glen, or cleft of a mountain, covered with hanging woods, having, at bottom, a stream of fine water, that forms a number of cascades in its descent to join the Leven, so that the scene is quite enchanting.

"I have seen the Lago di Gardi, Albano de Vico, Bolsena, and Geneva, and I prefer Loch-Lomond to them all; a preference which is certainly owing to the verdant islands that seem to float upon its surface, affording the most enchanting objects of repose to the excursive view. Nor are the banks destitute of beauties, which even partake of the sublime. On this side they display a sweet variety of wood-land, cornfields, and pasture, with several agreeable villas, emerging, as it were, out of the lake, till, at some distance, the prospect terminates in huge mountains, covered with heath, which, being in the bloom, affords a very rich covering of purple. Every thing here is romantic beyond imagination. This country is justly styled the

Arcadia of Scotland. I do not doubt but it may vie with Arcadia in every thing but climate. I am sure it excels it in verdure, wood, and water."

A poet, bred up amongst such scenes, must become doubly attached to his art, and, accordingly, it appears that Smollett was, in the highest degree, sensible of the beauties of nature, although his fame has chiefly risen upon his power of delineating human character. He obtained the rudiments of classical knowledge at the Dunbarton grammar-school, then taught by Mr. John Love, the scarce less learned antagonist of the learned Ruddiman. From thence he removed to Glasgow, where he pursued his studies with diligence and success, and was finally bound apprentice to Mr. John Gordon, an eminent surgeon. This destination was contrary to young Smollett's wishes, which strongly determined him to a military life, and he is supposed to have avenged himself both of his grandfather, who contradicted his inclinations, and of his master, by describing the former under the unamiable character of the old judge, and the latter as Mr. Potion, the first master of *Roderick Random.* At a later period, he did Mr. Gordon justice by mentioning him in the following terms: "I was introduced to Mr. Gordon," says Matthew Bramble, "a patriot of a truly noble spirit, who is father of the linen-manufactory in that place, and was the great promoter of the city work-house, infirmary, and other works of public utility. Had he lived in ancient Rome, he

would have been honoured with a statue at the public expense."

During his apprenticeship, Smollett's conduct indicated that love of frolic, practical jest, and playful mischief, of which his works show many proofs, and the young novelist gave also several proofs of his talents and propensity to satire. It is said, that his master expressed his conviction of Smollett's future eminence in very homely, but expressive terms, when some of his neighbours were boasting the superior decorum and propriety of their young pupils. "It may be all very true," said the keen-sighted Mr. Gordon; "but give me, before them all, my own bubbly-nosed callant, with the stane in his pouch."

In the eighteenth year of Smollett's life, his grandfather, Sir James, died, and made no provision by his will for the children of his youngest son, a neglect which, joined to other circumstances already mentioned, procured him, from his irritable descendant, the painful distinction which the old judge holds in the narrative of *Roderick Random.*

Without efficient patronage of any kind, Smollett, in his nineteenth year, went to London, to seek his fortune wherever he might find it. He carried with him the *Regicide*, a tragedy, written during the progress of his studies, but which, though it evinces in particular passages the genius of the author, cannot be termed with justice a performance suited for the stage. Lord Lyttleton, as a patron—Garrick and Lacy, as managers—gave the youthful author some

encouragement, which perhaps, the sanguine temper of Smollett overrated; for, in the story of Mr. Melopoyn where he gives the history of his attempts to bring the *Regicide* on the stage, the patron and the manager are not spared; and, in *Peregrine Pickle*, the personage of Gosling Scrag, which occurs in the first edition only, is meant to represent Lord Lyttleton. The story is more briefly told in the preface to the first edition of the *Regicide*, where the author informs us that his tragedy "was taken into the protection of one of those little fellows who are sometimes called great men, and, like other orphans neglected accordingly. Stung with resentment, which I mistook for contempt, I resolved to punish this barbarous indifference, and actually discarded my patron; consoling myself with the barren praise of a few associates, who in the most indefatigable manner, employed their time and influence in collecting from all quarters observations on my piece, which in consequence of those suggestions, put on a new appearance almost every day, until my occasion called me out of the kingdom."

Disappointed in the hopes he had founded on his theatrical attempt, Smollet accepted the situation of a surgeon's mate on board of a ship of the line, in the expedition to Carthegena, in 1741, of which he published a short account in *Roderick Random*, and a longer narrative in a *Compendium of Voyages*, published in 1751. But the term of our author's service in the navy was chiefly remarkable from his having

acquired, in that brief space, such intimate knowledge of our nautical world as enabled him to describe sailors with such truth and spirit of delineation that, from that time, whoever has undertaken the same task has seemed to copy more from Smollett than from nature. Our author quitted the navy, in disgust alike with the drudgery, and with the despotic discipline, which, in those days was qualified by no urbanity on the part of the superiour officers, and which exposed subordinates in the service to such mortifications, as a haughty spirit like that of Smollett could very ill endure. He left the service in the West Indies, and after a residence of some time in the island of Jamaica, returned to England in 1746.

It was at this time, when, incensed at the brutal severities exercised by the government's troops in the Highlands, to which romantic regions he was a neighbour by birth, Smollett wrote the pathetic, spirted, and patriotic verses entitled *The tears of Caledonia.* The late Robert Graham, esq. of Gartmore, a particular friend and trustee of Smollett, has recorded the manner in which this effusion was poured forth. "Some gentlemen having met at a tavern were amusing themselves before supper, with a game at cards ; while Smollett, not choosing to play, sat down to write. One of the company, who also was nominated by him one of his trustees (Gartmore himself), observing his earnestness, and supposing he was writing verses, asked him if it was not so. He accordingly read them the first sketch of his *Tears of Scot-*

land, consisting only of six stanzas: and, on their remarking that the termination of the poem, being too strongly expressed, might give offence to the persons whose political opinions were different, he sat down, without reply, and with an air of great indignation, subjoined the concluding stanza:

> "While the warm blood bedews my veins,
> And unimpar'd remembrance reigns,
> Resentment of my country's fate,
> Within my filial breast shall beat.
> Yes, spite of thine insulting foe,
> My Sympathizing verse shall flow.
> Mourn, hapless Caledonia, mourn,
> Thy banish'd peace, thy laurels torn!"

Smollett was now settled in London, and commenced his career as a professional man. He was not successful as a physician, probably because his independent and haughty spirit neglected the by-paths which lead to fame in that profession. One account says, that he failed to render himself agreeable to his female patients, certainly not for want of address or figure for both were remarkably pleasing, but more probably by a hasty impatience of listening to petty complaints, and a want of sympathy with those who laboured under no real indisposition. It is remarkable, that although very many, perhaps the greatest number of successful medical men, have assumed a despotic authority over their patients after their character was established, few or none have risen to preeminence in practice who used the same want of cer-

emony in the commencement of their career. Perhaps, however, Dr. Smollett was too soon discouraged, and abandoned prematurely a profession in which success is proverbially slow.

Smollett, who must have felt his own powers, had naturally recourse to his pen; and besides repeated attempts to get his tragedy acted, sent forth, in 1746 *Advice*, and, in 1747 *Reproof*, both poetical satires possessed of considerable merit, but which only influenced the fate of the author, as they increased the number of his personal enemies. Rich, the manager, was particularly satirized in *Reproof*. Smollett had written, for the Covent-Garden theatre, an opera called *Alceste* which was not acted in consequence of some quarrel betwixt the author and manager, which Smollett thus avenged.

About 1747, Smollett was married to Miss Lascelles, a beautiful and accomplished woman, to whom he had become attached in the West Indies. Instead of an expected fortune of £3000, he gained, by this connexion, only a lawsuit, and the increased expense of house-keeping, which he was still less able to afford, and which again obliged him to have recourse to his literary talents.

Necessity is the mother of invention in literature as well as in the arts, and the necessity of Smollett brought him forth in his pre-eminent character of a novelist. *Roderick Random* may be considered as an imitation of Le Sage, as the hero flits through almost every scene of public and private life, recording,

as he paints his own adventures, the manners of the times, with all their various shades and diversities of colouring, but forming no connected plot or story, the several parts of which hold connection with, or bear proportion to, each other. It was the second example of the minor romance, or English novel. Fielding had, shortly before, set the example in his *Tom Jones*, and a rival of almost equal eminence, in 1748, brought forth *The Adventures of Roderick Random*, a work which was eagerly received by the public, and brought both reputation and profit to the author.

It was generally believed that Smollett painted some of his own early adventures under the veil of fiction; but the public carried the spirit of applying the characters of a work of fiction to living personages much farther, perhaps, than the author intended. Gawkey, Crabbe, and Potion, were assigned to individuals in the west of Scotland; Mrs. Smollett was supposed to be Narcissa; the author himself represented Roderick Random (of which there can be little doubt); a book-binder and barber, the early acquaintances of Doctor Smollett, contended for the character of the attached, amiable, simple-hearted Strap; and the two naval officers, under whom Smollett had served, were stigmatized under the names of Oakum and Whiffle. Certain it is that the contempt with which his unfortunate play had been treated forms the basis of Mr. Melopoyn's story, in which Garrick and Lyttleton are roughly treated under the characters of Marmozet and Sheerwit. The public did not taste less keenly

the real merits of this interesting and humorous work, because they conceived it to possess the zest arising from personal allusion; and the sale of the work exceded greatly the expectations of all concerned.

Having now the ear of the public, Smollett published, by subscription, his unfortunate tragedy. *The Regicide*, in order to shame those who had barred his access to the stage. The preface is filled with complaints, which are neither just nor manly, and with strictures upon Garrick and Lyttleton, which amount almost to abuse. The merits of the piece by no means vindicate this extreme resentment on the part of the author, and of this Smollett himself became at length sensible. He was impetuous, but not sullen in his resentment, and generously allowed, in his *History of England*, the full merit to those whom, in the first impulse of passion and disappointment, he had treated with injustice.*

* Desirous "of doing justice in a work of truth for wrongs done in a work of fiction," (to use his own expression) in giving a sketch of the liberal arts in his *History of England*, he remarked, "the exhibitions of the stage were improved, to the most exquisite entertainment, by the talents and management of Garrick, who greatly surpassed all his predecessors of this, and perhaps every other nation, in his genius for acting, in the sweetness and variety of his tones, the irresistible magic of his eye, the fire and vivacity of his action, the elegance of attitude, and the whole pathos of expression.

"Candidates for literary fame appeared even in the higher sphere of life, embellished by the nervous sense and extensive erudition of a Corke, by the delicate taste, the polished muse, and tender feelings of a Lyttleton."

In 1750, Smollett made a tour to Paris, where he gleaned materials for future works of fiction, besides enlarging his acquaintance with life and manners. A coxcomb painter whom he met on this occasion formed the original of the exquisite Pallet, while Dr. Akenside a man of a very different character, was marked the future prey of satire, as the pedantic doc-

Not satisfied with this *public* declaration of his sentiments, he wrote in still stronger terms to Mr. Garrick.

"Dear Sir, "CHELSEA, Jan, 27, 1762.

"I this morning received your *Winter's Tale*, and am agreeably flattered by this mark of your attention. What I said of Mr. Garrick, in the History of England, was, I protest, the language of my heart. I shall rejoice, if he thinks I have done him barely justice. I am sure the public will think I have done him no more than justice. In giving a short sketch of the liberal arts, I could not, with any propriety, forbear mentioning a gentleman so eminently distinguished by a genius that has no rival. Besides, I thought it was a duty incumbent on me, in particular, to make a public atonement, in a work of truth, for wrongs done him in a work of fiction.

"Among the other inconveniences arising from ill-health, I deeply regret my being disabled from a personal cultivation of your good-will, and the unspeakable enjoyment I should sometimes derive from your private conversation, as well as from the public exertion of your talents; but, sequestered as I am from the world of entertainment, the consciousness of standing well in your opinion will ever afford singular satisfaction to,

"Dear Sir,

"Your very humble servant,

"T. SMOLLETT."

tor of medicine. He is said to have offended Smollett by some national reflections on Scotland, while his extravagant zeal for liberty, which was in no great danger, and his pedantic and exclusive admiration of the manners of classical antiquity, afforded, as Smollett has drawn them, an ample fund of ridicule.

Peregrine Pickle is supposed to have been written chiefly in Paris, and appeared in 1751. It was received by the public with uncommon avidity, and a large impression dispersed, notwithstanding the efforts of certain booksellers and others whom Smollett accuses of attempts to obstruct the sale, the book being published on account of the author himself. His irritable temper induced him to run hastily before the public with complaints, which, howsoever well or ill-grounded, the public has been at all times accustomed to hear with great indifference. Many professional authors, philosophers, and other public characters of the time, were also satirized with little restraint.

The splendid merit of the work itself was a much greater victory over the author's enemies, if he really had such, than any which he could gain by personal altercation with unworthy opponents. Yet by many his second novel was not thought quite equal to his first. In truth, there occurs betwixt *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* a difference which is often observed betwixt the first and second efforts of authors who had been successful in this line. *Peregrine Pickle* is more finished, more sedulously laboured into

excellence, exhibits scenes of more accumulated interest, and presents a richer variety of character and adventure than *Roderick Random;* but yet there is an ease and simplicity in the first novel which is not quite attained in the second, where the author has substituted splendour of colouring for simplicity of outline. Thus, of the inimitable sea characters, Trunnion, Pipes, and even Hatchway, border upon caricature; but Lieutenant Bowling and Jack Rattlin are truth and nature itself. The reason seems to be, that when an author brings forth his first representation of any class of characters, he seizes on the leading and striking outlines, and therefore, in the second attempt of the same kind, he is forced to make some distinction, and either to invest his personage with less obvious and ordinary traits of character, or to place him in a new and less natural light. Hence, it would seem, the difference in opinion which sometimes occurs betwixt the author and the reader, respecting the comparative value of early and subsequent publications. The author naturally prefers that upon which he is conscious much more labour has been bestowed, while the public often remain constant to their first love, and prefer the facility and truth of the earlier work to the more elaborate execution displayed in those which follow it. But though the simplicity of its predecessor was not, and could not be, repeated in Smollett's second novel, his powers are so far from evincing any falling off, that in *Peregrine Pickle* there is a much wider range of character and inci-

dent than is exhibited in *Roderick Random*, as well as a more rich and brilliant display of the talents and humour of the distinguished author.

Peregrine Pickle did not, however, owe its success entirely to its intrinsic merit. The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, a separate tale, thrust into the work with which it has no sort of connexion, in the manner introduced by Cervantes, and followed by Le Sage and Fielding, added considerably to its immediate popularity. These Memoirs, which are now regarded as a tiresome and unnecessary excrescence upon the main story, contain the History of Lady Vane, renowned at that time for her beauty and her intrigues.* The lady not only furnished Smollett with the materials for recording her own infamy, but it is said, rewarded him handsomely for the insertion of her story. Mr. M'Kercher, a character of a different description, was also introduced. He was remarkable for the benevolent quixotry with which he supported the pretensions of the unfortunate Mr. Annesley, a claimant of the title and property of Anglesea. The public took the interest in the frailties of

* Lady Vane was the daughter of Francis Hawes, esq, of Purley Hall, near Reading, in Berkshire, one of the South Sea Directors in 1720, and married about the beginning of 1732, at the age of seventeen, to Lord William Hamilton, who dying July 11, 1734, she married May 19. 1735, Lord Viscount Vane, of the kingdom of Ireland, with whom she had various scandalous lawsuits, and died in London, March 31, 1788, in the seventy-second year of her life.

Lady Vane, and the benevolence of Mr. M'Kercher, which they always take in the history of living, and remarkable characters; and the anecdotes respecting the demirep and the man of charity greatly promoted the instant popularity of *Peregrine Pickle.*

The extreme license of some of the scenes described in this novel gave just offence to the thinking part of the public; and the work, in conformity to their just complaints, was much altered in the second edition. The preliminary advertisement has these words: —"It was the author's duty, as well as his interest, to oblige the public with this edition, which he has endeavoured to render less unworthy of their acceptance, by retrenching the superfluities of the first, reforming its manners, and correcting its expression. Divers uninteresting incidents are wholly suppressed; some humorous scenes he has endeavoured to heighten; and he flatters himself that he has expunged every adventure, phrase, and insinuation, that could be construed, by the most delicate reader, into a trespass upon the rules of decorum.

"He owns with contrition, that in one or two instances he gave way too much to the suggestions of personal resentment, and represented characters, as they appeared to him at the time, through the exaggerated medium of prejudice. But he has, in this impression, endeavoured to make atonement for these extravagances. Howsoever he may have erred in point of judgment or discretion, he defies the whole world to prove that he was ever guilty of one act of

malice, ingratitude, or dishonour. This declaration he may be permitted to make, without incurring the imputation of vanity or presumption, considering the numerous shafts of envy, rancour, and revenge, that have lately, both in public and private, been levelled at his reputation."

In reference to this palinode, we may barely observe that the passages retrenched in the second edition are, generally speaking, the detail of those frolics in which the author has permitted his turn for humour greatly to outrun his sense of decency and propriety; and, in this respect, notwithstanding what he himself says in the passage just quoted, the work would have been much improved by a more unsparing application of the pruning-knife. Several personal reflections were also omitted, particularly those on Lyttleton and Fielding, whom he had upbraided for his dependence on that statesman's patronage.*

* Lyttleton's celebrated Monody on the Death of his Wife was ridiculed by a burlesque Ode on the Death of My Grandmother; and the nature of his patronage to Fielding was thus contemptuously noticed in a recommendation to a young author to feed the vanity of Gosling Serag, Esq. "I advise Mr Spondy to give him the refusal of this same pastoral; and who knows but he may have the good fortune of being listed in the number of his beef-eaters, in which case he may, in process of time, be provided for in the Customs or Church; and when he is inclined to marry his own cook-maid, his gracious patron may condescend to give the bride away, and may finally settle him in his old age as a trading Westminster Justice."—*Peregrine Pickle*, Edit. 1751, vol. iv. p. 123.

Doctor Anderson informs us, that, at this period, Smollett seems to have obtained the degree of doctor of physic, probably from a foreign university, and announced himself a candidate for fame and fortune as a physician, by a publication entitled "An Essay on the External Use of Water, in a letter to Dr. ——, with particular Remarks upon the present Method of using the mineral waters at Bath, in Somersetshire, and a Plan for rendering them more safe, agreeable, and efficacious. 4to., 1752." The performance advanced his reputation as a man of science and taste, but failed to conduct the physician to professional eminence and wealth. This is the only publication in the line of his profession which is known to have proceeded from his pen. If the essay was intended to serve as an introduction to practice, it was totally unsuccessful. Perhaps Smollett's character as a satirist, and the readiness he had shown to ingraft the character and history of individuals into works of fiction, were serious obstacles to him in a character which demands so much confidence as that of a family-physician. But it is probable, that the author's chief object in the publication was to assert the cause of a particular friend, Mr. Cleland, a surgeon of Bath, then engaged in a controversy concerning the use of these celebrated waters.

In the year 1753, Dr. Smollett published *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom*, one of those works which seem to have been written for the purpose of showing how far humour and genius can go

in painting a complete picture of human depravity. Smollett has made his own defence for the loathsome task which he has undertaken. "Let me not," says he, in the dedication to Dr.——(we are unable to supply the blank), "be condemned for having chosen my principal character from the purlieus of treachery and fraud, when I declare my purpose is to set him up as a beacon for the benefit of the inexperienced and unwary, who, from the perusal of these memoirs, may learn to avoid the manifold snares with which they are continually surrounded in the paths of life, while those who hesitate on the brink of iniquity may be terrified from plunging into that irremediable gulf, by surveying the deplorable fate of Ferdinand Count Fathom." But, while we do justice to the author's motives, we are obliged to deny the validity of his reasoning. To a reader of a good disposition and well-regulated mind the picture of moral depravity, presented in the character of Count Fathom is a disgusting pollution of the imagination. To those on the other hand, who hesitate on the brink of meditated iniquity, it is not safe to detail the arts by which the ingenuity of villany has triumphed in former instances: and it is well known, that the publication of the real account of uncommon crimes, although attended by the public and infamous punishment of the perpetrators, has often had the effect of stimulating others to similar actions. To some unhappy minds, it may occur as a sort of extenuation of the crime which they meditate, that even if they carry their purpose into

execution, their guilt will fall far short of what the author has ascribed to his fictitious character; and there are other imaginations so ill regulated, that they catch infection from stories of wickedness, and feel an insane impulse to emulate and to realize the pictures of villany, which are embodied in such narratives as those of Zeluco or Count Fathom.

Condemning, however, the scope and tendency of the work, it is impossible to deny our applause to the wonderful knowledge of life and manners which is evinced in the tale of *Count Fathom*, as much as in any of Smollett's works. The horrible adventure in the hut of the robbers is a tale of natural terror, which rises into the sublime, and, though often imitated, has never yet been surpassed, or perhaps equalled. In *Count Fathom*, also, is to be found the first candid attempt to do justice to a calumniated race. The benevolent Jew of Cumberland had his prototype in the worthy Israelite whom Smollett has introduced into the history of *Fathom*.

Shortly after this publication, Smollett's warmth of temper involved him in an unpleasant embarrassment. A person called Peter Gordon, after having been saved by Smollett's humanity from imprisonment and ruin, and, after having prevailed upon him to interpose his credit in his behalf to an inconvenient extent, withdrew within the verge of the court, set his creditors at defiance, and treated his benefactor with so much personal insolence, that Smollett chastised him by a beating. A prosecution was commenced by Gordon, and

his counsel, Mr Home Campbell, whether in indulgence of his natural rudeness and impetuosity, of which he had a great share, or whether moved by some special enmity against Smollett, opened the case with an unusual torrent of violence and misrepresentation. But the good sense and impartiality of the jury acquitted Smollett of the assault, and he was no sooner cleared of the charge than he sent an angry remonstrance to Mr. Home Campbell, demanding that he should retract what he had said to his disadvantage. It does not appear how the affair was settled, but Smollett's manifesto may be read in his life by Dr. Moore, as well as in that of Dr. Anderson. Besides, that this expostulation is too long for the occasion, and far too violent to be dignified, Smollett imputes to Campbell the improbable charge, that he was desirous to revenge himself upon the author of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, because he had satirized the profession of the law. Lawyers are seldom very sensitive on this head, and if they were, they would have constant exercise for their irritability, since scarce a satirical author, of whatsoever description, has concluded his work without giving cause to the gentleman of the robe, for some such offence, as Smollett supposes Campbell to have taken in the present instance.

Smollett's next task was a new version of *Don Quixote*, to which he was encouraged by a liberal subscription. The work was inscribed by Don Ricardo Wall, principal secretary of state to his most Catholic majesty, by whom the undertaking had been encour-

aged. Smollett's version of this admirable classic is thus elegantly compared with those of Motteux (or Ozell) and of Jarvis, by the late ingenious and amiable Lord Woodhouselee, in his "Essay on the Principles of Translation."

"Smollett inherited from nature a strong sense of ridicule, a great fund of original humour, and a happy versatility of talent, by which he could accomodate his style to almost every species of writing. He could adopt alternately the solemn, the lively, the sarcastic, the burlesque, and the vulgar. To these qualifications he joined an inventive genius and a vigorous imagination. As he possessed talents equal to the composition of original works of the same species with the romance of Cervantes, so it is not, perhaps, possible to conceive a writer more completely qualified to give a perfect translation of that novel.

"Motteux, with no great abilities as an original writer, appears to me to have been endowed with a strong perception of the ridiculous in human character, a just discernment of the weaknesses and follies of mankind. He seems, likewise, to have had a great command of the various styles which are accomodated to the expression both of grave, burlesque, and of low humour. Inferior to Smollett in inventive genius, he seems to have equalled him in every quality which was essentially requisite to a translator of *Don Quixote*. It may, therefore, be supposed, that the contest between them will be nearly equal, and the question of preference very difficult to be decided. It would

have been so, had Smollett confided in his own strength, and bestowed on his task that time and labour which the length and difficulty of the work required; but Smollett too often wrote in such circumstances that despatch was his primary object. He found various English translations at hand, which he judged might save him the labour of a new composition. Jarvis could give him faithfully the sense of his author; and it was necessary only to polish his asperities, and lighten his heavy and awkward phraseology. To contend with Motteux, Smollett found it necessary to assume the armour of Jarvis. This author had purposely avoided, through the whole of his work, the smallest coincidence of expression with Motteux, whom, with equal presumption and injustice, he accuses, in his preface, of having taken his version wholly from the French. We find, therefore, both in the translation of Jarvis, and that of Smollett, which is little else than an improved edition of the former, that there is a studied rejection of the phraseology of Motteux. Now Motteux, though he has frequently assumed too great a license, both in adding to, and retrenching from the ideas of his original, has, upon the whole, a very high degree of merit as a translator. In the adoption of corresponding idioms, he has been eminently fortunate; and, as in these there is no great latitude, he has, in general, preoccupied the appropriate phrases; so that a succeeding translator, who proceeded on the rule of invariably rejecting his phraseology, must have, in gen-

eral, altered for the worse. Such, I have said, was the rule laid down by Jarvis, and by his copyist and improver Smollett, who, by thus absurdly rejecting what his own judgment and taste must have approved, has produced a composition decidedly inferior, on the whole, to that of Motteux.

"Smollett was a good poet, and most of the verse translations interspersed through this work are executed with ability. It is on this head that Motteux has assumed to himself the greatest license. He has very presumptuously mutilated the poetry of Cervantes, by leaving out many entire stanzas from the larger compositions, and suppressing some of the smaller altogether. Yet the translation of those poems which he has retained, is possessed of much poetical merit, and, in particular, those verses which are of a graver cast are, in my opinion, superior to those of his rival.

"On the whole, I am inclined to think, the version of Motteux is by far the best we have yet seen of the romance of Cervantes, and that, if corrected in its licentious observations and enlargements, and in some other particulars, which I have noticed in the course of this comparison, we should have nothing to desire superior to it in the way of translation."

After the publication of *Don Quixote*, Smollett paid a visit to his native country, in order to see his mother who then resided at Scotston, in Peebleshire, with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Telfer. Dr. Moore has given us the following beautiful anec-

dote respecting the meeting of the mother with her distinguished son.

"On Smollett's arrival, he was introduced to his mother, with the connivance of Mrs. Telfer, as a gentleman from the West Indies, who was intimately acquainted with her son. The better to support his assumed character, he endeavoured to preserve a serious countenance, approaching to a frown; but, while his mother's eyes were rivetted on his countenance, he could not refrain from smiling; she immediately sprung from her chair, and, throwing her arms round his neck, exclaimed: 'Ah, my son! my son! I have found you at last!'

"She afterwards told him, that, if he had kept his austere looks, and continued to *gloom*, he might have escaped detection some time longer; 'but your old roguish smile,' added, she 'betrayed you at once!'"

Having revisited the seat of his family, then possessed by his cousin, and spent a day or two at Glasgow, the scene of his early studies and frolics, Smollett returned to England in order to undertake the direction of the *Critical Review*, a work which was established under the patronage of the Tories and High-Church party, and which was intended to maintain their principles, in opposition to the *Monthly Review*, conducted according to the sentiments of Whigs and Low-Church men.

Smollett's taste and talents qualified him highly for periodical criticism, as well as the promptitude of his wit, and the ready application which he could make of

a large store of miscellaneous learning and acquired knowledge. But, on the other hand, he was always a hasty, and often a prejudiced judge; and, while he himself applied the critical scourge without mercy, he could not endure that those who felt his blows should either wince or complain under his chastisement. To murmur against his decrees was the sure way to incur further marks of his resentment, and thus his criticism deviated still farther from dispassionate discussion, as the passions of the reviewer and of the author became excited into a clamourous contest of mutual rejoinder, recrimination, and abuse. Many petty squabbles, which occurred to teaze and embitter the life of Smollett, and to diminish the respectability with which his talents must otherwise have invested him, had their origin in his situation as editor of the *Critical Review*. He was engaged in one controversy with the notorious Shebbeare, in another with Dr. Grainger, the elegant author of the beautiful ode to Solitude, and in several wrangles and brawls with persons of less celebrity.

But the most unlucky controversy in which his critical office involved our author, was that with Admiral Knowles, who had published a pamphlet vindicating his own conduct in the secret expedition against Rochfort, which disgracefully miscarried, in 1757. This defence was examined in the *Critical Review;* and Smollett, himself the author of the article, used the following intemperate expressions concerning Admiral Knowles. "He is an admiral

without conduct, an engineer without knowledge, an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity." The admiral commeneed a prosecution against the printer of the Review, declaring at the same time that he desired only to discover the author of the paragraph, and, should he prove a gentleman, to demand satisfaction of a different nature. This decoy, for such it proved, was the most effectual mode which could have been devised to draw the high-spirited Smollett within the danger of the law. When the court were about to pronounce judgment in the case, Smollett appeared, and took the consequences upon himself, and Admiral Knowles redeemed the pledge he had given, by enforeing judgment for a fine of one hundred pounds, and obtaining a sentence against the defendant of three months' imprisonment. How the admiral reconciled his conduct to the rules usually observed by gentlemen, we are not informed; but the proceeding seems to justify even Smollett's strength of expression, when he terms him an officer without resolution, and a man without veracity. This imprisonment took plaee in 1759, and was, as we have already stated, the most memorable result of the various quarrels, in which his duty, as a critic, engaged Dr. Smollett. We resume the account of his literary labours, which our detail of these disputes has something interrupted.

About 1757, Smollett compiled and published, without his name, a useful and entertaining collection, entitled, *A Compendium of Authentic and Enter-*

taining Voyages, digested in a chronological Series; the whole exhibiting a Clear View of the Customs, Manners, Religion, Government, Commerce, and Natural History of most Nations of the known World; illustrated with a Variety of genuine Charts, Maps, Plans, Heads, &c., in 7 vols. 12mo. This Collection introduced to the British public several voyages which were otherwise little known, and contained, amongst other articles not before published, Smollett's own account of the *Expedition to Carthagena*, of which he had given a short sketch in the *Adventures of Roderick Random.*

In the same year, 1757, the farce or comedy of *The Reprisals, or the Tars of Old England*, was written and acted, to animate the people against the French, with whom we were then at war. In pursuance of this plan, every species of national prejudice is called up and appealed to, and the Frenchman is represented as the living representative and original of all the caricature prints and ballads against the eaters of *soup maigre* and wearers of wooden shoes. The sailors are drawn to the life, as the sailors of Smollett always are. The Scotchman and Irishman are hit off with the touch of a caricaturist of skill and spirit. But the story of the piece is as trivial as possible, and, on the whole, it forms no marked exception to the observation, that successful novelists have been rarely distinguished by excellence in dramatic composition.

Garrick's generous conduct to Smollett upon this

occasion fully obliterated all recollection of old differences. The manager allowed the author his benefit on the sixth, instead of the ninth night of the piece, abated certain charges or advances usually made on such occasions, and himself performed Lusignan on the same evening, in order to fill the theatre. Still, it seems reports were in circulation that Smollett had spoken unkindly of Garrick, which called forth the following contradiction, in a letter which our author addressed to that celebrated performer.

"In justice to myself, I take the liberty to assure you, that if any person accuses me of having spoken disrespectfully of Mr. Garrick, of having hinted that he solicited for my farce, or had interested views in bringing it upon the stage, he does me wrong, upon the word of a gentleman. The imputation is altogether false and malicious. Exclusive of other considerations, I could not be such an idiot to talk in that strain when my own interest so immediately required a different sort of conduct. Perhaps the same insidious methods have been taken to inflame former animosities, which on my part are forgotten and self-condemned. I must own you have acted in this affair of the farce with that candour, openness, and cordiality, which even mortify my pride, while they lay me under the most sensible obligation; and I shall not rest satisfied until I have an opportunity to convince Mr. Garrick that my gratitude is at least as

warm as any other of my passions. Mean while I profess myself,

"Sir, Your most humble

Servant,

"T. SMOLLETT."

In the beginning of the year 1758, Smollett published his *Complete History of England, deduced from the Descent of Julius Cæsar to the Treaty of Aix-la Chapelle, in* 1748; in 4 vols. 4to. It is said that this voluminous work, containing the history of thirteen centuries, and written with uncommon spirit and correctness of language, was composed and finished for the press within fourteen months, one of the greatest exertions of facility of composition which was ever recorded in the history of literature. Within a space so brief it could not be expected that new facts should be produced; and all the novelty which Smollett's history could present must needs consist in the mode of stating facts, or in the reflections deduced from them. In this work, the author fully announced his political principles, which, notwithstanding his Whig education, were those of a moderate Tory, and a favourer of the monarchical part of our constitution. For such a strain of sentiment, some readers will think no apology necessary; and by others none which we might propose would be listened to. Smollett has made his own defence, in a letter to Dr. Moore, dated January 2, 1758.

"I deferred answering your kind letter, until I should have finished my history, which is now completed. I was agreeably surprised to hear that my work had met with any approbation at Glasgow, for it was not at all calculated for that meridian. The last volume will, I doubt not, be severely censured by the western-country whigs of Scotland.

"I desire you will divest yourself of prejudice, at least as much you can, before you begin to peruse it, and consider well the facts before you pass judgment. Whatever may be its defect, I protest before God, I have, as far as in me lay, adhered to truth, without espousing any faction, though I own I sat down to write with a warm side to those principles in which I was educated; but, in the course of my inquiries, some of the Whig ministers turned out such a set of sordid knaves that I could not help stigmatizing them for their want of integrity and sentiment."

In another letter to Dr. Moore, dated Chelsea, September 28, he expresses himself as follows:—

"I speak not of the few who think like philosophers, abstracted from the notions of the vulgar. The little petulant familiarities of our friend I can forgive, in consideration of the good will he has always manifested towards me and my concerns. He is mistaken, however, in supposing that I have imbibed priestly notions; I consider the church not as a religious, but a political establishment, so minutely interwoven in our constitution, that the one cannot be detached from the other without the most imminent

danger of destruction to both. The use which your friend makes of the *Critical Review*, is whimsical enough ;* but I shall be glad if he uses it at any rate. I have not had leisure to do much in that work for some time past, therefore I hope you will not ascribe the articles indiscriminately to me ; for I am equally averse to the praise and censure that belong to other men. Indeed, I am sick of both, and wish to God my circumstances would allow me to consign my pen to oblivion. I really believe that mankind grow every day more malicious.

"You will not be sorry to hear that the weekly sale of the History has increased to above ten thousand. A French gentleman of talents and erudition has undertaken to translate it into that language, and I have promised to supply him with corrections."

As a powerful political party were insulted, and, as they alleged, misrepresented in Smollett's history, they readily lent their influence and countenance to the proprietors of Rapin's history, who, alarmed at the extensive sale of Smollett's rival work, deluged the public with criticisms and invectives against the author and his book. In process of time the controversy slept, and the main fault of the history was found to be, that the haste with which the author had

* Dr. Moore's friend was so much enraged at some criticisms in that review, that he continued to take it, for no other purpose than that he might read all the publications censured by it, and none of those which it praised.

accomplished his task had necessarily occasioned his sitting down contented with superficial, and, sometimes, inaccurate information.

In the course of 1760, and 1761, the *Adventures of Sir Lancelot Greaves* appeared, in detached portions in various numbers of the *British Magazine* or *Monthly Repository*. Smollett appears to have executed his task with very little premeditation. During a part of the time he was residing at Paxton, in Berwickshire, on a visit to the late George Home, Esq., and when post-time drew near, he used to retire for half an hour, or an hour, to prepare the necessary quantity of *copy*, as it is technically called in the printing-house, which he never gave himself the trouble to correct, or even to read over. Sir Lancelot Greaves was published separately, in 1762.

The idea of this work was probably suggested to our author during his labours upon Don Quixote, and the plan forms a sort of corollary to the celebrated romance of *Don Quixote*. The leading imperfection is the great extravagance of the story, as applicable to England, and to the period when it is supposed to have happened. In Spain, ere the ideas of chivalry were extinct amongst that nation of romantic Hidalgos, the term of Don Quixote's frenzy seems not altogether extravagant, and the armour which he assumed was still the ordinary garb of battle. But in England, and in modern times, that a young, amiable, and otherwise sensible man, acquainted also with the romance of Cervantes, should have adopted

a similar whim, gives good foundation for the obvious remark of Ferret: "What! you set up for a modern Don Quixote! the scheme is too stale and extravagant; what was an humorous and well-timed satire in Spain near two hundred years ago, will make but a sorry jest, when really acted upon from affectation, at this time of day in England." To this Sir Lancelot replies, by a tirade which does not remove the objection so shrewdly stated by the misanthrope, affirming that he only warred against the foes of virtue and decorum; or, in his own words, "had assumed the armour of his forefathers, to remedy evils which the law cannot reach, to detect fraud and treason, abase insolence, mortify pride, discourage slander, disgrace immodesty, and stigmatize ingratitude." The degree of sanity which the amiable enthusiast possesses ought to have shown him, that the generous career he had undertaken would be much better accomplished without his armour than with that superfluous and ridiculous appendage; and that, for all the purposes of reformation to be effected in England, his pocket-book, filled with bank-notes, would be a better auxiliary than either sword or lance. In short, it becomes clear to the reader that Sir Lancelot wears panoply only that his youthful elegance and address, his bright armour, and generous courser, may make him the more exact counterpart to the Knight of La Mancha.

If it be unnatural that Sir Lancelot should become a knight-errant, the whim of Crowe, the captain of a

merchant vessel, adopting, at second hand, the same folly, is, on the same grounds, still more exceptionable. There is nothing in the honest seaman's life or profession which renders it at all possible that he should have caught contagion from the insanity of Sir Lancelot. But granting the author's premises, and surely we often make large concessions with less advantage in prospect, the quantity of comic humour which Smollett has extracted out of Crowe and Crabshaw, has as much hearty mirth in it as can be found even in his more finished compositions. The inferior characters are all sketched with the same bold, free, and peculiar touch that distinguishes this powerful writer; and besides these we have named, Ferret and Clarke, the kind hearted attorney's clerk, with several subordinate personages, have all the vivacity of Smollett's strong pencil. Aurelia Darnel is by far the most feminine, and, at the same time, lady-like person to whom the author has introduced us. There is also some novelty of situation and incident, and Smollett's recent imprisonment in the King's Bench, for the attack on Admiral Knowles, enabled him to enrich his romance with a portrait of the unfortunate Theodore, King of Corsica, and other companions in his captivity, whose misfortunes or frolics had conducted them to that place of imprisonment.

Smollett's next labour was to lend his aid in finishing that useful compendium, *The Modern Universal History*, to which he contributed the histories of France, Italy, and Germany. In the year 1761, he

published in detached numbers, his *Continuation of the History of England*, which he carried on until he brought the narrative down to 1765. The sale of this work was very extensive; and although Smollett acquired by both histories about 2000*l.*, which, in those days, was a large sum, yet the bookseller is said to have made 1000*l.* clear profit on the very day he made his bargain, by transferring it to a brother of the trade. This Continuation, appended, as it usually is to the History of England by Hume, forms a classical and standard work. It is not our present province to examine the particular merits of Smollett as a historian; but it cannot be denied that, as a clear and distinct narrative of facts, strongly and vigorously told, with a laudable regard to truth and impartiality, the Continuation may vie with our best historical works. The author was incapable of being swayed by fear or favour, and where his judgment is influenced, we can see that he was misled only by an honest belief in the truth of his own arguments. At the same time, the Continuation, like Smollett's original History, has the defects incident to hurried composition, and likewise those which naturally attach themselves to contemporary narrative. Smollett had no access to those hidden causes of events which time brings forth in the slow progress of ages; and his work is chiefly compiled from those documents of a public and general description which often contain rather the colourable pretexts which statesmen are pleased to assign for their actions than the real mo-

tives themselves. The English History, it is true, suffers less than those of other countries from this restriction of materials; for there are so many eyes upon our public proceedings, and they undergo such sifting discussion, both in and out of parliament, that the actual motives of those in whose hands government is vested for the time, become speedily suspected, even if they are not actually avowed or unveiled. Upon the whole, with all its faults and deficiencies, it may be long ere we have a better History of Britain, during the latter period, than is to be found in the pages of Smollett.

Upon the accession of George III, and the commencement of Lord Bute's administration, Smollett's pen was employed in the defence of the young monarch's government, in a weekly paper called *The Briton*, which was soon silenced and driven out of the field by the celebrated *North Briton*, conducted by John Wilkes. Smollett had been on terms of kindness with this distinguished demagogue, and had twice applied to his friendship,—once for the kind purpose of obtaining the dismission of Dr. Johnson's black servant, Francis Barber, from the navy, into which he had inconsiderately entered; and again, to mediate betwixt himself and Admiral Knowles, in the matter of the prosecution. Closer ties than these are readily dissolved before the fire of politics. The friends became political opponents; and Smollett, who had to plead an unpopular cause to unwilling auditors, and who, as a Scotchman, shared deeply and personally in that un-

popularity, was compelled to give up the *Briton*, more, it would seem, from lack of spirit in his patron Lord Bute, to sustain the contest any longer, than from any deficiency of zeal on his own part. So, at least, we may interpret the following passage, in a letter which he wrote from Italy to Caleb Whiteford, in 1770.

"I hope you will not discontinue your endeavours to represent faction and false patriotism in their true colours, though I believe the ministry little deserves that any man of genius should draw his pen in their defence. They seem to inherit the absurd stoicism of Lord Bute, who sat himself up as a pillory, to be pelted by all the blackgaurds of England, upon the supposition that they would grow tired and leave off. I don't find that your ministers take any pains even to vindicate their moral characters from the foulest imputations: I would never desire a stronger proof of a bad heart than a total disregard of reputation. A late nobleman, who had been a member of several administrations, owned to me, that one good writer was of more importance to the government than twenty place-men in the House of Commons."

In 1763, Smollett lent his assistance, or at least his name, to a translation of Voltaire's works, and also to a compilation entitled *The present State of all Nations, containing a Geographical, Natural, Commercial, and Political History of all the Countries of the Known World.*

About this time, Elizabeth, an amiable and accom-

plished young person, the only offspring of Smollett's marriage and to whom her father was devotedly attached, died in the fifteenth year of her life, leaving her parents overwhelmed with the deepest sorrow.

Ill health aided the effects of grief, and it was under these circumstances that Smollett undertook a journey to France and Italy, in which countries he resided from 1763 till 1766. Soon after his return in 1766, he published his *Travels through France and Italy, containing Observations on Character, Customs, Religion, Government, Police, Commerce, Arts, and Antiquities, with a particular Description of the Town, Territory, and Climate of Nice, to which is added, a Register of the Weather, kept during a Residence of Eighteen Months in that City;* in 2 vols. 8vo. in the form of letters to his friends in England, from different parts of those countries.

Smollett's Travels are distinguished by acuteness of remark and shrewdness of expression,— by strong sense and pointed humour; but the melancholy state of the author's mind induced him to view all the ordinary objects from which travellers receive pleasure, with cynical contempt. Although so lately a sufferer by the most injurious national prejudices, he failed not to harbour and cherish all those which he himself had formerly adopted against the foreign countries through which he travelled. Nature had either denied Smollett the taste necessary to understand and feel the beauties of art, or else his embittered state of mind had, for the time, entirely deprived him

of the power of enjoying them. The harsh censures which he passes on the Venus de Medicis, and upon the Pantheon, and the sarcasm with which his criticisms are answered by Sterne, are both well-known. Yet, be it said without offence to the memory of that witty and elegant writer, it is more easy to assume, in composition, an air of alternate gaiety and sensibility, than to practise the virtues of generosity and benevolence, which Smollett exercised during his whole life, though often, like his own Matthew Bramble, under the disguise of peevishness and irritability. Sterne's writings show much flourish concerning virtues of which his life is understood to have produced little fruit; the temper of Smollett was

> —— like a lusty winter,
> Frosty, but kindly.

On his return to Britain, in 1766, he visited Scotland for the last time, and had the pleasure of receiving a parent's last embrace. His health was now totally ruined. Constant rheumatism, and the pain arising from a neglected ulcer, which had got into a bad state, rendered him a victim to excruciating agonies. He afterwards recovered, in a great degree, by applying mercurial ointment, and using the solution of corrosive sublimate. He gives a full account of the process of the cure in a letter to Dr. Moore, which concludes thus: "Had I been as well in summer, I should have exquisitely enjoyed my expedition

to Scotland, which was productive of nothing to me but misery and disgust. Between friends, I am now convinced that my brain was in some measure affected; for I had a kind of *coma vigil* upon me from April to November, without intermission. In consideration of these circumstances, I know you will forgive all my peevishness and discontent, and tell good Mrs. Moore, to whom I present my most cordial respects, that, with regard to me, she has yet seen nothing but the wrong side of the tapestry."

Finding himself at liberty to resume his literary labours, Smollett published, in 1769, the political satire called *The Adventures of an Atom*, in which are satirized the several leaders of political parties, from 1754 till the dissolution of Lord Chatham's administration. His inefficient patron Lord Bute, is not spared in this work; and Chatham is severely treated under the name of Jowler. The inconsistency of this great minister, in encouraging the German war, seems to have altered Smollett's opinion of his patriotism; and he does his acknowledged talents far less than justice, endeavouring by every means to undervalue the successes of his brilliant administration, or to impute them to causes independent of his measures. The chief purpose of the work (besides that of giving the author the opportunity to raise his hand, like that of Ishmael, against every man) is to inspire the horror of continental connexions.

Shortly after the publication of *The Adventures of an Atom*, disease again assailed Smollett with redoub-

led violence. Attempts being vainly made to obtain for him the office of consul, in some port of the Mediterranean, he was compelled to seek a warmer climate, without better means of provision than his own precarious finances could afford. The kindness of his distinguished friend and countryman, Dr. Armstrong, (then abroad) procured for Dr. and Mrs. Smollett a house at Monte-Novo, a village situated on the side of a mountain overlooking the sea, in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, a romantic and salutary abode, where he prepared for the press the last, and, like music, "sweetest in the close," the most pleasing of his compositions, *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker*. This delightful work was published in 1771, in 3 vols. 12 mo., and very favourably received by the public.

The very ingenious scheme of describing the various effects produced upon different members of the same family by the same objects is not original, though it has been supposed to be so. Anstey, the facetious author of the *New Bath Guide*, had employed it six or seven years before *Humphrey Clinker* appeared. But Anstey's diverting satire was but a light sketch, compared to the finished and elaborate manner in which Smollett has, in the first place, identified his characters, and then fitted them with language, sentiments, and powers of observation, in exact correspondence with their talents, temper, condition, and disposition. The portrait of Matthew Bramble, in which Smollett described his own peculiarities, using

towards himself the same rigid anatomy which he exercised upon others, is unequalled in the line of fictitious composition. It is peculiarly striking to observe, how often, in admiring the shrewd and sound sense, active benevolence, and honourable sentiments combined in Matthew, we lose sight of the humorous peculiarities of his character, and with what effect they are suddenly recalled to our remembrance, just at the time and in the manner when we least expect them. All shrewish old maids, and simple waiting-women, which shall hereafter be drawn, must be contented with the praise of approaching in merit to Mrs. Tabitha Bramble and Winifred Jenkins. The peculiarities of the hot-headed young Oxonian, and the girlish romance of his sister, are admirably contrasted with the sense, and pettish, half-playful misanthropy of their uncle; and Humphrey Clinker (who, by the way, resembles Strap, supposing that excellent person to have a turn towards methodism) is, as far as he goes, equally delightful. Captain Lismahago was probably no violent caricature, allowing for the manners of the time. We can remember a good and gallant officer who was said to have been his prototype, but believe the opinion was only entertained from the striking resemblance he bore in externals to the doughty captain.

When *Humphrey Clinker* appeared in London, the popular odium against the Scotch nation, which Wilkes and Churchill had excited, was not yet appeased, and Smollett had enemies amongst the peri-

odical critics, who failed not to charge him with undue partiality to his own country. They observed, maliciously, but not untruly, that the cynicism of Matthew Bramble becomes gradually softened as he journeys northward, and that he who equally detested Bath and London, becomes wonderfully reconciled to walled cities and the hum of men, when he finds himself an inhabitant of the northern metropolis. It is not worth defending so excellent a work against so weak an objection. The author was a dying man, and his thoughts were turned towards the scenes of youthful gaiety, and the abode of early friends, with a fond partiality, which had they been even less deserving of his attachment, would have been not only pardonable, but praiseworthy.

Moritur, et moriens dulces reminiscitur Argos.

Smollett failed not, as he usually did, to introduce himself, with the various causes he had to complain of to the world, into the pages of this delightful romance. He appears as Mr. Serle, and more boldly under his own name, and, in describing his own mode of living, he satirizes without mercy the bookmakers of the day, who had experienced his kindness without repaying him by gratitude. It does not, however, seem perfectly fair to make them atone for their ungracious return to his hospitality by serving up their characters as a banquet to the public; and, in fact, it too much resembles the design of which Pallet accuses the physician, of converting his guests in-

to patients, in order to make him amends for the expense of the entertainment.

But criticism, whether candid or unjust, was soon to be of little consequence to the author. After the publication of his last work he lingered through the summer, and at length, after enduring the vicissitudes of a wasting and painful disorder, with unabated composure, the world lost Tobias Smollett, on the 21st of October 1771, at the untimely age of only fifty-one years. There is little doubt, that grief for the loss of his daughter, a feeling of ungrateful neglect from those who were called upon to lend him assistance, a present sense of confined circumstances, which he was daily losing the power of enlarging by his own exertions, together with gloomy apprehensions for the future, materially aided the progress of the mortal disorder by which he was removed.

More happy in this respect than Fielding, Smollett's grave at Leghorn is distinguished by a plain monument erected by his widow, to which Dr. Armstrong his constant and faithful friend, supplied the following spirited inscription :—

Hic ossa conduntur
Tobiæ Smollett, Scoti;
Qui, prosapia generosa et antiqua natus,
Priscæ virtutis exemplar emicuit;
Aspectu ingenuo,
Corpore valido,
Pectore animoso,
Indole apprime benigna,

Et fere supra facultates munifica,
Insignis.
Ingenio feraci, faceto, versatili,
Omnigenæ fere doctrinæ mire capaci,
Varia fabularum dulcedine
Vitam moresque hominum,
Ubertate summa ludens, depinxit.
Adverso, interim, nefas! tali tantoque alumno,
Nisi quo satyræ opipare supplebat,
Seculo impio, ignavo, fatuo,
Quo musæ vix nisi nothæ
Mecænatulis Britannicis
Fovebantur.
In memoriam
Optimi et amabilis omnino viri
Permultis amicis desiderati,
Hocce marmor,
Dilectissima simul et amantissima conjux.
L. M.
Sacravit.

In the year 1744, a column was erected to Smollett's memory, near the house in which he was born, by his cousin, James Smollett, Esq., of Bonhill, with the following nervous and classical inscription, written by professor George Stewart, of Edinburgh, and partly by the late John Ramsay, Esq., of Ochtertyre, and corrected by Dr. Johnson. The lines printed in Itlaics are by the latter.

[Siste viator!
Si leporis ingeniique venam benignam,
Si morum callidissimum pictorem,
Unquam es miratus,]

Immorare paululum memoriæ
TOBIÆ SMOLLETT, M. D.
Viri virtutibus hisce
Quas in homine et cive
Et laudes et imiteris,
Haud mediocriter ornati:
Qui in literis variis versatus,
Postquam felicitate sibi propria,
Sese posteris commendaverat,
Morte acerba raptus
Anno ætatis 51.
Eheu! quam procul a patria!
Prope Liburni portum in Italia,
Jacet sepultus.
Tali tantoque viro, patruelo suo,
Cui in decursu Lampada
Se potius tradidisse decuit,
Hanc Columnam,
Amoris, eheu! inane monumentum
In ipsis Levinæ ripis,
Quas versiculis sub exitu vitæ illustratas,
Primis infans vagitibus personuit,
Ponendam curavit
JACOBUS SMOLLETT, de Bonhill.
Abi et reminiscere,
Hoc quidem honore,
Non modo defuncti memoriæ
Verum etiam exemplo, prospectum esse;
Aliis enim, si modo digni sint,
Idem erit virtutis præmium!

The widow of Smollett long continued an inhabitant of the neighbourhood of Leghorn, supporting herself in obscurity and with difficulty, upon the the small

remnant of fortune he had been able to bequeath her. We remember a benefit play being performed on her account at Edinburgh, in which Houston Stewart Nicholson, Esq., an amateur performer, appeared in the part of Pierre. The profits are said to have amounted to £300. An epilogue, written for the occasion, by Mr. Graham, of Gartmore, was spoken by the late Mr. Woods, of the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh.

Smollett's *Ode to Independence*, the most characteristic of his poetical works, was published, two years after his death, by the Messrs. Foulis, of Glasgow. The mythological commencement is eminently beautiful.

His name was appended to a version of Telemachus, as, during his life, it had appeared to a translation of Gil Blas, to which it is supposed he contributed little or nothing more. 1785, a farce, called *The Israelites, or, The Pampered Nabob*, was acted on the Covent Garden stage, for the benefit of Mr. Aiken. It was ascribed to Smollett on very dubious evidence, was indifferently received, and has never since appeared, either on the stage or in print.

The person of Smollett was eminently handsome, his features prepossessing, and, by the joint testimony of all his surviving friends, his conversation in the highest degree instructive and amusing. Of his disposition, those who have read his works (and who has not done so ?) may form a very accurate estimate, for in each of them he has presented, and some-

times under various points of view, the leading features of his own character, without disguising the most unfavourable of them. Nay, there is room to believe, that he rather exaggerated than softened that cynical turn of temper which was the principal fault of his disposition, and which engaged him in so many quarrels. It is remarkable that all his heroes, from Roderick Random downwards, possess a haughty, fierce irritability of disposition, until the same features appeared softened, and rendered venerable by age and philosophy, in Matthew Bramble. The sports in which they most delight, are those which are attended with disgrace, mental pain, and bodily mischief to others; and their humanity is never represented as interrupting the course of their frolics. We know not that Smollett had any other marked failing, save that which he himself has so often and so liberally acknowledged. When unseduced by his satirical propensities, he was kind, generous, and humane to others; bold, upright and independent in his own character; stooped to no patron, sued for no favour, but honestly and honourably maintained himself on his literary labours; when, if he was occasionally employed in work which was beneath his talents, the disgrace must remain with those who saved not such a genius from the degrading drudgery of compiling and translating. He was a doating father, and an affectionate husband; and the warm zeal with which his memory was cherished by his surviving friends, showed clearly the reliance which they

placed upon his regard. Even his resentments, though often hastily adopted, and incautiously expressed, were neither ungenerous nor enduring. He was open to conviction, and ready to make both acknowledgment and allowance when he had done injustice to others, willing also to forgive and to be reconciled when he had received it at their hand.

Churchill* and other satirists falsely ascribe to Smollett the mean passion of literary envy, to which his nature was totally a stranger. The manner in which he mentions Fielding and Richardson, in the account of the literature of the century, shows how much he understood, and how liberally he praised, the merit of those, who, in the view of the world, must have been regarded as his immediate rivals.

* The article upon *The Rosciad*, in the *Critical Review*, (that fertile maker of all dissensions in which Smollett was engaged,) was so severe as to call forth the bard's bitter resentment, in the second edition; where, ascribing the offensive article to Smollett, in which he was mistaken, he thus apostrophizes him :

> " Whence could arise this mighty critic spleen.
> The muse a trifler, and her theme so mean ?
> What had I done, that angry Heav'n should send
> The bitterest foe, where most I wish'd a friend ?
> Oft hath my tongue been wanton at thy name,
> And hail'd the honours of thy matchless fame.
> For me let hoary *Fielding* bite the ground,
> So nobler *Pickle* stand superbly bound.
> From Livy's temples tear th' historic crown,
> Which, with more justice, blooms upon thy own." &c.

"The genius of Cervantes," in his generous expression "was transfused into the novels of Fielding, who painted the characters, and ridiculed the follies of life, with equal strength, humour, and propriety." A passage which we record with pleasure, as a proof that the disagreement which existed between Smollett and Fielding did not prevent his estimating with justice, and recording in suitable terms, the merits of the father of the English novel. The historian, with equal candour, proceeds to tell his reader, "that the laudable aim of enlisting the passions on the side of virtue, was successfully pursued by Richardson in his *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and *Grandison*, a species of writing equally new and extraordinary, where, mingled with much superfluity and impertinence, we find a sublime system of ethics, an amazing knowledge and command of human nature."*

In leaving Smollett's personal, for his literary character, it is impossible not to consider the latter as contrasted with that of his eminent contemporary Fielding. It is true that such comparisons, though recommended by the example of Plutarch, are not in general the best mode of estimating individual merit. But in the present case, the history, accomplishments, talents, pursuits, and, unfortunately, the fates of these two great authors, are so closely allied, that it is

* A poet of inferior note, author of a poem called *The Race*, has brought the same charge against Smollett, in still coarser terms.

scarcely possible to name the one without exciting recollections of the other. Fielding and Smollett were both born in the highest rank of society, both educated to learned professions, yet both obliged to follow miscellaneous literature as the means of subsistence. Both were confined, during their lives, by the narrowness of their circumstances,—both united a humourous cynicism with generosity and good nature, both died of the diseases incident to a sedentary life, and to literary labour,—and both drew their last breath in a foreign land to which they retreated under the adverse circumstances of a decayed constitution, and an exhausted fortune.

Their studies were no less similar than their lives. They both wrote for the stage, and neither of them successfully. They both meddled in politics; they both wrote travels, in which they showed that their good humour was wasted under the sufferings of their disease; and, to conclude, they were both so eminently successful as novelists, that no other English author of that class has a right to be mentioned in the same breath with Fielding and Smollett.

If we compare the works of these two great masters yet more closely, we may assign to Fielding, with little hesitation, the praise of a higher and purer taste, than was shown by his rival; more elegance of composition and expression; a nearer approach to the grave irony of Swift and Cervantes; a great deal more address or felicity in the con-

duct of his story; and, finally, a power of describing amiable or virtuous characters, and of placing before us heroes, and especially heroines, of a much higher as well as pleasing character, than Smollett was able to present.

Thus the art and felicity with which the story of Tom Jones evolves itself, is no where found in Smollett's novels, where the heroes pass from one situation in life, and from one stage of society, to another totally unconnected, except that, as in ordinary life, the adventures recorded, though not bearing upon each other, or on the catastrophe, befall the same personage. Characters are introduced and dropped without scruple, and, at the end of the work, the hero is found surrounded by a very different set of associates from those with whom his fortune seemed at first indissolubly connected. Neither are the characters which Smollett designed should be interesting, half so amiable as his readers could desire. The low-minded Roderick Random, who borrows Strap's money, wears his clothes, and, rescued from starving by the attachment of that simple and kind-hearted adherent, rewards him by squandering his substance, receiving his attendance as a servant, and beating him when the dice ran against him, is not to be named in one day with the open-hearted, good-humoured, and noble-minded Tom Jones, whose libertinism (one particular omitted) is perhaps rendered but too amiable by his good qualities. We believe there are few readers who are not disgusted with the

miserable reward assigned to Strap in the closing chapter of the novel. Five hundred pounds, (scarce the value of the goods he had presented to his master) and the hand of a reclaimed street-walker, even when added to a Highland farm, seem but a poor recompense for his faithful and disinterested attachment. We should do Jones equal injustice by weighing him in the balance with the savage and ferocious Pickle, who, besides his gross and base brutality towards Emilia, besides his ingratitude to his uncle, and the savage propensity which he shows, in the pleasure he takes to torment others by practical jokes, resembling those of a fiend in glee—exhibits a low and ungentlemanlike tone of thinking, only one degree higher than that of Roderick Random. The blackguard frolic of introducing a prostitute, in a false character, to his sister, is a sufficient instance of that want of taste and feeling which Smollett's admirers are compelled to acknowledge may be detected in his writings. It is yet more impossible to compare Sophia or Amelia to the females of Smollett, who (excepting Aurelia Darnel) are drawn as the objects rather of appetite than of affection, and excite no higher or more noble interest than might be created by the Houris of the Mahomedan paradise.

It follows from this superiority on the side of Fielding, that his novels exhibit, more frequently than those of Smollett, scenes of distress, which excite the sympathy and pity of the reader. No one can refuse his compassion to Jones when, by a train

of practices upon his generous and open character, he is expelled from his benefactor's house under the foulest and most heart-rending accusations; but we certainly sympathise very little in the distress of Pickle, brought on by his own profligate profusion, and enhanced by his insolent misanthropy. We are only surprised that his predominating arrogance does not weary out the benevolence of Hatchway and Pipes, and scarce think the ruined spendthrift deserves their persevering and faithful attachment.

But the deep and fertile genius of Smollett afforded resources sufficient to balance these deficiencies; and when the full weight has been allowed to Fielding's superiority of taste and expression, his northern contemporary will still be found fit to balance the scale with his great rival. If Fielding had superior taste; the palm of more brilliancy of genius, more inexhaustible riches of invention, must in justice be awarded to Smollett. In comparison with his sphere, that in which Fielding walked was limited; and, compared with the wealthy profusion of varied character and incident which Smollett has scattered through his works, there is a poverty of composition about his rival. Fielding's fame rests on a single *chef d'œuvre;* and the art and industry which produced *Tom Jones*, was unable to rise to equal excellence in *Amelia.* Though, therefore, we may justly prefer *Tom Jones* as the most masterly example of an artful and well-told novel, to any individual work of Smollett, yet *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*,

and *Humphrey Clinker*, do each of them far excel *Joseph Andrews* or *Amelia;* and to descend still lower, *Jonathan Wild*, or the *Journey to the Next World*, cannot be put into momentary comparison with *Sir Lancelot Greaves*, or *Ferdinand Count Fathom.*

Every successful novelist must be more or less a poet, even although he may never have written a line of verse. The quality of imagination is absolutely indispensable to him: his accurate power of examining and embodying human character and human passion, as well as the external face of nature, is not less essential; and the talent of describing well what he feels with acuteness, added to the above requisites, goes far to complete the poetic character. Smollett was, even in the ordinary sense, which limits the name to those who write verses, a poet of distinction; and, in this particular, superior to Fielding, who seldom aims at more than a slight translation from the classics.* Accordingly, if he is surpassed by Fielding in moving pity, the northern novelist

* A judge, competent in the highest degree, has thus characterized Smollett's poetry. "They have a portion of delicacy not to be found in his novels; but they have not, like those prose fictions, the strength of a master's hand. Were he to live again we might wish him to write more poetry, in the belief that his poetical talent would improve by exercise; but we should be glad if we had more of his novels just as they are."—*Specimens of the British Poets, by Thomas Campbell*, vol. 6. The truth is, that in these very novels are expended many of the ingredients both of grave and humorous poetry.

soars far above him in his powers of exciting terror. Fielding has no passages which approach in sublimity to the robber scene in *Count Fathom;* or to the terrible description of a sea engagement, in which Roderick Random sits chained and exposed upon the poop, without the power of motion or exertion, during the carnage of a tremendous engagement. Upon many other occasions, Smollett's descriptions ascend to the sublime; and, in general, there is an air of romance in his writings which raises his narratives above the level and easy course of ordinary life. He was, like a pre-eminent poet of our own day, a searcher of dark bosoms, and loved to paint characters under the strong agitation of fierce and stormy passions. Hence misanthropes, gamblers, and duellists, are as common in his works, as robbers in those of Salvator Rosa, and are drawn, in most cases, with the same terrible effect. To compare *Ferdinand Count Fathom* to the *Jonathan Wild* of Fielding, would perhaps be unfair to the latter author; yet, the works being composed on the same plan, (a very bad one, as we think,) we cannot help placing them by the side of each other, when it becomes at once obvious that the detestable Fathom is a living and existing miscreant, at whom we shrink as from the presence of an incarnate fiend, while the villain of Fielding seems rather a cold personification of the abstract principle of evil, so far from being terrible, that, notwithstanding the knowledge of the world argued in many passages of his adventures, we

are compelled to acknowledge him absolutely tiresome.

It is, however, chiefly in his profusion, which amounts almost to prodigality, that we recognise the superior richness of Smollett's fancy. He never shows the least desire to make the most either of a character, or a situation, or an adventure, but throws them together with a carelessness which argues unlimited confidence in his own powers. Fielding pauses to explain the principles of his art, and to congratulate himself and his readers on the felicity, with which he constructs his narrative, or makes his characters evolve themselves in the progress. These appeals to the reader's judgment, admirable as they are, have sometimes the fault of being diffuse, and always the great disadvantage, that they remind us we are perusing a work of fiction, and that the beings with whom we have been conversant during the perusal, are but a set of evanescent phantoms, conjured up by a magician for our amusement. Smollett seldom holds communication with his readers in his own person. He manages his delightful puppet-show without thrusting his head beyond the curtain, like Gines de Passamonte, to explain what he is doing; and hence, besides that our attention to the story remains unbroken, we are sure that the author, fully confident in the abundance of his materials, has no occasion to eke them out with extrinsic matter.

Smollett's sea characters have been deservedly considered as inimitable; and the power with which

he has diversified them, in so many instances, distinguishing the individual features of each honest tar, while each possesses a full proportion of professional manners and habits of thinking, is a most absolute proof of the richness of fancy with which the author was gifted, and which we have noticed as his chief advantage over Fielding. Bowling, Trunnion, Hatchway, Pipes, and Crowe, are all men of the same class, habits, and tone of thinking, yet so completely differenced by their separate and individual characters, that we at once acknowledge them as distinct persons, while we see and allow that every one of them belong to the old English navy. These striking portraits have now the merit which is cherished by antiquaries—they preserve the memory of the school of Benbow and Boscawen, whose manners are now banished from the quarter-deck to the forecastle. The naval officers of the present day, the splendour of whose actions has thrown into shadow the exploits of a thousand years, do not affect the manners of a fore-mastman, and have shown how admirably well their duty can be discharged without any particular attachment to tobacco or flip, or the decided preference of a check shirt over a linen one.

In the comic part of their writings, we have already said, Fielding is pre-eminent in grave irony, a Cervantic species of pleasantry, in which Smollett is not equally successful. On the other hand, the Scotchman (notwithstanding the general opinion denies that quality to his countrymen) excels in broad

and ludicrous humour. His fancy seems to run riot in accumulating ridiculous circumstances one upon another, to the utter destruction of all power of gravity; and perhaps no books ever written have excited such peals of inextinguishable laughter, as those of Smollett. The descriptions which affect us thus powerfully border sometimes upon what is called farce or caricature; but, if it be the highest praise of pathetic composition that it draws forth tears, why should it not be esteemed the greatest excellence of the ludicrous that it compels laughter? The one tribute is at least as genuine an expression of natural feeling as the other; and he who can read the calamities of Trunnion and Hatchway, when run away with by their mettled steeds, or the inimitable absurdities of the feast of the ancients, without a good hearty burst of honest laughter, must be well qualified to look sad and gentlemanlike with Lord Chesterfield or Master Stephen.

Upon the whole, the genius of Smollett may be said to resemble that of Rubens. His pictures are often deficient in grace; sometimes coarse, and even vulgar in conception; deficient too in keeping, and in the due subordination of parts to each other; and intimating too much carelessness on the part of their artist. But these faults are redeemed by such richness and brilliancy of colours; such a profusion of imagination—now bodying forth the grand and terrible—now the natural, the easy, and the ludicrous; there is so much of life, action, and bustle, in every

group he has painted; so much force and individuality of character, that we readily grant to Smollett an equal rank with his great rival Fielding, while we place both far above any of their successors in the same line of fictitious composition.

CHARLES JOHNSTONE.

Of the author of *Chrysal*, which resembles the *Diable Boiteux*, we can say but little.

Charles Johnstone was an Irishman by birth, though, it is said, a Scotchman by descent, and of the Annandale family. If so, we have adopted the proper orthography, though his name seems sometimes to have been spelled Johnson. He received a classical education, and being called to the bar, came to England to practise. Johnstone, like Le Sage, — and the coincidence is a singular one—was subject to the infirmity of deafness, an inconvenience which naturally interfered with his professional success; although, by a rare union of high talents with eloquence and profound professional skill, joined to an almost intuitive acuteness of apprehension, we have in our time seen the disadvantage splendidly surmounted. But Johnstone possessed considerable abilities, of which he has left at least one admirable example, in the following pages. His talents were of a lively and companionable sort, and as he was much abroad in the world, he had already, in his youth, kept such general society with men of all descriptions as enabled him to trace their vices and follies with a pencil so powerful.

Chrysal is said to have been composed at the late

Lord Mount-Edgcumbe's, in Devonshire, during a visit to his lordship. About 1760, the work was announced in the newspapers as "a dispassionate, distinct account of the most remarkable transactions of the present times all over Europe." The publication immediately followed, and possessing at once the allurement of setting forth the personal and secret history of living characters, and that of a strong expression and powerful painting, the public attention was instantly directed towards it. A second edition was called for almost immediately. To which the author made several additions, which are incorporated with the original text. But the public avidity being still unsatisfied, the third edition, in 1761, was augmented to four volumes. The author, justly thinking that it was unnecessary to bestow much pains in dove-tailing his additional matter upon the original narrative, and conscious that no one was interested in the regular transmission of *Chrysal* from one hand to another, has only connected the original work and the continuation by references, which will not be found always either accurate or intelligible—a point upon which the author seems to have been indifferent.

After this successful effort, Mr. Johnstone published the following obscure and forgotten works:

The Reverie; or, a Flight to the Paradise of Fools. 2 vols. 12 mo. 1762. A satire.

The History of Arbaces, Prince of Betlis. 2 vols. 12mo. 1774. A sort of political romance.

The Pilgrim; or, a Picture of Life. 2 vols. 12mo. 1775.

The History of John Juniper, Esquire, alias *Juniper Jack.* 3 vols. 12mo. 1781. A romance in low life.

These publications we perused long since, but remember nothing of them so accurately as to induce us to hazard an opinion on their merits.

So late as 1782, twenty years after the appearance of *Chrysal,* Mr. Johnstone went to seek fortune in India, and had the happy chance to find it there, though not without encountering calamity on the road. The Brilliant, Captain Mears, in which he embarked, was wrecked off the Joanna Islands, and many lives lost. Johnstone, with the captain and some others, was saved with difficulty.

In Bengal, Johnstone wrote much for the newspapers, under the signature of Oneiropolos. He became joint proprietor of one of the Bengal newspapers, acquired considerable property, and died about the year 1800, and, as is conjectured, in the 70th year of his age. Most of these facts have been transferred from Mr. Chalmer's *Biographical Dictionary.*

It is only as the author of what has been termed the Scandalous Chronicle of the time, that Johnstone's literary character attracts our notice. We have already observed that there is a close resemblance betwixt the plan of *Chrysal* and the *Diable Boiteux.* In both works a Spirit, possessed of the power of

reading the thoughts, and explaining the motives of mankind, is supposed to communicate to a mortal a real view of humanity, stripping men's actions of their borrowed pretexts, and simulated motives, and tracing their source directly to their passions or their follies. But the French author is more fortunate than the English, in the medium of communication he has chosen, or rather borrowed from Guevara. Asmodeus is himself a personage admirably imagined and uniformly sustained, and who entertains the reader as completely by the display of his own character as by that of any which he anatomizes for the instruction of Don Cleofas. The reader, malicious as he is, conceives even a kind of liking for the fiend, and is somewhat disconcerted with the idea of his returning to his cabalistic bottle; nay, could we judge of the infernal regions by this single specimen, we might be apt to conceive, with Sancho Panza, that there is some good company to be found even in Hell. Chrysal, on the other hand, is a mere elementary spirit without feeling, passion, or peculiar character, and who only reflects back, like a mirror, the objects which have been presented to him, without adding to or modifying them by any contribution of his own.

The tracing of a piece of coin into the hands of various possessors, and giving an account of the actions and character of each, is an ingenious medium for moral satire, which, however, had been already employed by Dr. Bathurst, the friend of Johnson, in the

Adventures of a Halfpenney, which form the forty-third number of the *Adventurer*, published April 3, 1753, several years before *Chrysal.*

It is chiefly in the tone of the satire that the *Adventures of Chrysal* differ from those of Le Sage's heroes. We have compared the latter author to Horace, and may now safely rate Charles Johnstone as a prose Juvenal. The Frenchman describes follies which excite our laughter—the Briton produces vices and crimes which excite our horror and detestation. And as we before observed, that the scenes of Le Sage might, in a moral point of view, be improved by an infusion of more dignity and vigour of feeling, so Johnstone might have rendered his satire more poignant without being less severe, by throwing more lights among his shades, and sparing us the grossness of some of the scenes which he reprobates. As Le Sage renders vice ludicrous, Johnstone seems to paint even folly detestable, as well as ridiculous. His Herald and Auctioneer are among his lightest characters; but their determined roguery and greediness render them hateful even while they are comic.

It must be allowed to this caustic satirist, that the time in which he lived called for such an unsparing and uncompromising censor. A long course of national peace and prosperity had brought with these blessings their usual attendant evils, selfishness, avarice, and gross debauchery. We are not, perhaps, more moral in our conduct, than men were fifty or

sixty years since; but modern vice pays a tax to appearances, and is contented to wear a mask of decorum. A lady H—— and the Pollard Ashe, so often mentioned in Horace Walpole's Correspondence, would not certainly dare to insult decency in the public manner then tolerated; nor would our wildest debauchees venture to imitate the orgies of Mendenham Abbey, painted by Johnstone in such horrible colours. Neither is this the bound of our improvement. Our public men are now under the necessity of being actuated, or at least appearing to be so, by nobler motives than their predecessors proposed to themselves. Sir Robert Walpole, who, after having governed so many years by the most open and avowed corruption, amassed for himself a more than princely fortune out of the spoils of the state, would not now be tolerated. The age would not endure the splendours of Houghton. Our late ministers and statesmen have died, almost without an exception, beggared and bankrupt; a sure sign that if they followed the dictates of ambition, they were at least free from those of avarice; and it is clear that the path of the former may often lie parallel with that prescribed by public virtue, while the latter must always seduce its votary into the by-way of private selfishness. The general corruption of the ministers themselves, and their undisguised fortunes, acquired by an avowed system of perquisites, carried, in our fathers' times, a corresponding spirit of greed and rapacity into every department, while at the same time it blinded the

eyes of those who should have prevented spoilation. If those in subordinate offices paid enormous fees to their superiors, it could only be in order to purchase the privilege of themselves cheating the public with impunity. And, in the same manner, if commissaries of the army and navy filled the purses of the commanders, they did so only that they might thereby obtain full license to exercise every sort of pillage at the expense of the miserable privates. We were well acquainted with men of credit and character, who served in the Havannah expedition, and we have always heard them affirm that the infamous and horrid scenes described in *Chrysal* were not, in the slightest degree, exaggerated. That attention to the wants, that watchful guardianship of the rights and interests of the private soldier and sailor, which, in our days, do honour to these services, were then totally unknown. The commanders in each service had in their eye the amassing of wealth, instead of the gathering of laurels, as the minister was determined to enrich himself, with indifference to the welfare of his country; and the elder Pitt, as well as Wolfe, were considered as characters almost above humanity, not so much for the eloquence and high talents of the one, or the military skill of the other, as because they made the honour and interest of their country their direct and principal object. They *dared*, to use the classical phrase, to contemn wealth—the statesman and soldier of the present day would,

on the contrary, not *dare* to propose it to himself as an object.

The comparative improvement of our manners, as well as of our government, is owing certainly, in a great measure, to more general diffusion of knowledge and improvement of taste. But it was fostered by the private virtues and patriotism of the late venerated monarch. The check which his youthful frown already put upon vice and license, is noticed in *Chrysal* more than once, and the disgrace of more than one minister, in the earlier part of his reign, was traced pretty distinctly to their having augmented their private fortunes by availing themselves of their political information to speculate in the funds. The abuses in public offices have in like manner, been restrained, the system of perquisites abolished, and all means of indirect advantage interdicted, as far as possible, to the servants of the public. In the army and navy the same salutary regulations have been adopted, and the commander in ehief has proved himself the best friend to his family and country in cutting up by the roots these infectious cankers, which gnawed our military strength, and which are so deservedly stigmatized in the caustic pages of *Chrysal.*

In Johnstone's time this reform had not commenced, and he might well have said, with such an ardent temper as he seems to have possesed, *Difficile est satyram non scribere.* He has, accordingly, indulged his bent to the utmost; and as most of his char-

acters were living persons, then easily recognized, he held the mirror to nature, even when it reflects such horrible features. His language is firm and energetic—his power of personifying characters striking and forcible, and the persons of his narrative move, breathe, and speak in all the freshness of life. His sentiments are in general those of the bold, high-minded and indignant censor of a loose and corrupted age; yet it cannot be denied, that Johnstone, in his hatred and contempt for the more degenerate vices of ingratitude, avarice, and baseness of every kind, shows but too much disposition to favour Churchill and other libertines, who thought fit to practise open looseness of manners; because they said it was better than hypocrisy. It is true such vices may subsist along with very noble and generous qualities; but as all profligacy has its root in self-gratification and indulgence, it is always odds that the weeds rise so fast as to choke the slower and nobler crop.

The same indulgence to the usual freedoms of a town life seems to have influenced Johnstone's dislike to the methodists, of whose founder, Whitefield, he has drawn a most odious and a most unjust portrait. It is not quite the province of the editor of a book of professed amusement to vindicate the tenets of a sect which holds almost all amusement to be criminal, but it is necessary to do justice to every one. The peculiar tenets of the methodists are, in many respects, narrow and illiberal—they are also

enthusiastical, and, acting on minds of a certain temperament, have produced the fatal extremities of spiritual presumption, or spiritual despair. But to judge as we would desire to be judged, we must try their doctrine, not by those points in which they differ, but by those in which they agree with all other Christians; and, if we find that the methodists recommend purity of life, strictness of morals, and a regular discharge of the duties of society, are they to be branded as hypocrites because they abstain from its amusements and its gaieties? Were the number of the methodists to be multiplied by a hundred, there would be enough behind to fill the theatres and encourage the fine arts. Respecting the remarkable person by whom the sect was founded, posterity has done him justice for the calumnies with which he was persecuted during his life, and which he bore with the enduring fortitude of a confessor. The poverty in which Whitefield died proved his purity of heart, and refuted the charge so grossly urged, of his taking a selfish interest in the charitable subscriptions which his eloquence promoted so effectually. His enthusiasm—for Providence uses, in accomplishing great ends, the imperfections as well as the talents of his creatures—served to awaken to a consciousness of their deplorable state thousands, to whose apathy and ignorance a colder preacher might have spoken in vain; and, perhaps, even the Church of England herself has been less impaired by the schism than benefitted by the effects of emulation upon her learn-

ed clergy. In a word, if Cowper's portrait of Whitefield has some traits of flattery, it still approaches far more near to the original than the caricature of Johnstone:

> He loved the world that hated him—the tear
> That dropped upon his bible was sincere.
> Assailed by scandal, and the tongue of strife,
> His only answer was a blameless life;
> And he that forged, and he that threw the dart,
> Had each a brother's interest in his heart.
> Paul's love of Christ, and steadiness unbribed,
> Were followed well in him, and well transcribed.

We think these remarks necessary to justice, in treating of a work, in which this memorable individual is so deeply charged. They can hardly be imputed to any other motive, since those likely to be gratified by this vindication cannot very consistently seek for it in this place. But readers of a different description may do well to remember that the cant of imputing to hypocrisy all pretensions to a severer scale of morals, or a more vivid sense of religion, is as offensive to sound reason and Christian philosophy as that which attaches a charge of guilt to matters of indifference, or to the ordinary amusements of life.

We would willingly hope that several of Johnstones' other characters, if less grossly calumniated than Whitefield, are at least considerably overcharged. The first Lord Holland was a thorough-bred statesman of that evil period, and the earl of Sandwich an open libertine, yet they also had their lighter shades of

character, although *Chrysal* holds them up to the unmitigated horror of posterity. The same may be said of others, and this exaggeration was the more easy, as Johnstone does not pretend that the crimes imputed to these personages were all literally committed, but admits that he invented such incidents as he judged might best correspond to the idea which he had formed of their character; thus rather shaping his facts according to a preconceived opinion, than deducing his opinion from facts which had actually taken place.

The truth is, that young, ardent, and bold, the author seems to have caught fire from his own subjects, and to have united credulity in belief with force of description, and to have pushed praise too readily into panegyric, while he exaggerated censure into reprobation. He every where shows himself strongly influenced by the current tone of popular feeling; nay, unless in the case of Wilkes, whose stimulated patriotism he seems to have suspected, his acuteness of discrimination seldom enables him to correct public opinion. The bill for the naturalization of the Jews had just occasioned a general clamour, and we see Chrysal, not only exposing their commercial character in the most odious colours, but reviving the ancient and absurd fable of their celebrating the feast of the passover by the immolation of Christian infants. With the same prejudiced credulity, he swallows without hesitation all the wild and inconsistent charges which were then heaped upon the order of the Jesuits,

and which occasioned the general clamour for their suppression.

On the other hand, because it was the fashion to represent the continental war, which had for its sole object the protection of the electorate of Hanover, as waged in defence of the Protestant religion, Johnstone has dressed up the selfish and atheistical Frederick of Prussia in the character of the Protestant hero, and put into his mouth a prayer adapted to the character of a self-devoted Christian soldier, who drew his sword in the defence of that religion which was enshrined in his own bosom. This is so totally out of all keeping and character, that we can scarce help thinking that the author has written, not his own sentiments, but such as were most likely to catch the public mind at the time.

But, feeling and writing under the popular impression of the moment, Johnstone has never failed to feel and write like a true Briton, with a sincere admiration of his country's laws, an ardent desire for her prosperity, and a sympathy with her interests, which more than atone for every error and prejudice. He testifies on many occasions his respect for the house of Brunswick, and leaves his testimony against the proceedings first commenced by Wilkes, and so closely followed by imitators of that unprincipled demagogue, for the purpose of courting the populace by slandering the throne. It is remarkable that, notwithstanding his zeal for king George and the Protestant religion, the Jacobite party, though their expi-

ring intrigues might have furnished some piquant anecdotes, are scarcely mentioned in *Chrysal.*

A key to the personages introduced to the reader, in *Chrysal*, was furnished by the author himself to Lord Mount Edgecombe, and another to captain Mears, with whom he sailed to India. It is published by Mr. William Davis, in his collection of *Bibliographical and Literary Anecdotes*, with this caveat: "The author's intention was to draw general characters; therefore, in the application of the key, the reader must exercise his own judgment." The Key is subjoined to the text with a few additional notes, illustrative of such incidents and characters, as properly belong to history or to public life. Anecdotes of private scandal are willingly left in the mystery in which the text has involved them; and some instances occur in which the obvious misrepresentations of the satirist have been modified by explanation. But when all exaggeration has been deducted from this singular work, enough of truth will still remain, in *Chrysal*, to incline the reader to congratulate himself that these scenes have passed more than half a century before his time.

STERNE.

Laurence Sterne was one of those few authors who have anticipated the labours of the biographer, and left to the world what they desired should be known of their family and their life.

"Roger Sterne* (says this narrative,) grandson to Archbishop Sterne, lieutenant in Handaside's regi-

* Mr. Sterne was descended from a family of that name, in Suffolk, one of which settled in Nottinghamshire. The following genealogy is extracted from Thoresby's Ducatus Leodinensis; p. 215.

Simon Sterne, of Mansfield.

Dr. Richard Sterne, Archbishop of York Ob. June, 1683. = Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Dickinson, Ob. 1670.

1 Richard Sterne, of York and Kilvington, esq. 1700.

2 William Sterne, of Mansfield.

3 Simon Sterne, of Elvington and Halifax, Ob. 1703. = Mary, daughter and heiress of Roger Jaques, Of Elvington, near York.

1 Richard. — Richard,

2 Roger. — Laurence Sterne.

3 Jaques, L.L.D. Ob. 1759.

4 Mary.

5 Elizabeth.

6 Frances.

ment, was married to Agnes Hebert, widow of a captain of a good family. Her family name was (I believe) Nuttle; though, upon recollection, that was the name of her father in-law, who was a noted sutler in Flanders, in Queen Anne's wars, where my father married his wife's daughter (N. B. he was in debt to him) which was in September 25, 1711, old style. This Nuttle had a son by my grandmother—a fine person of a man, but a graceless whelp!—What became of him, I know not. The family (if any left) live now at Clonmel, in the south of Ireland; at which town I was born, November 24, 1713, a few days after my mother arrived from Dunkirk.—My birthday was ominous to my poor father, who was on the day of our arrival, with many other brave officers, broke and sent adrift into the wide world, with a wife and two children—the elder of which was Mary. She was born at Lisle in French Flanders, July 10, 1712, new style.—This child was the most unfortunate:—She married one Weemans, in Dublin, who used her most unmercifully; spent his substance, became a bankrupt, and left my poor sister to shift for herself; which she was able to do but for a few months, for she went to a friend's house in the country, and died of a broken heart. She was a most beautiful woman, of a fine figure, and deserved a better fate.—The regiment in which my father served being broke, he left Ireland as soon as I was able to be carried, with the rest of his family, and came to the family seat at Elvington, near York, where his mother lived. She was daugh-

ter to Sir Roger Jaques, and an heiress. There we sojourned for about ten months, when the regiment was established, and our household decamped with bag and baggage for Dublin. Within a month of our arrival, my father left us, being ordered to Exeter; where, in a sad winter, my mother and her two children followed him, travelling from Liverpool, by land to Plymouth.—(Melancholy description of this journey, not necessary to be transmitted here.)—In twelve months we were all sent back to Dublin. My mother, with three of us (for she lay-in at Plymouth of a boy, Joram) took ship at Bristol, for Ireland, and had a narrow escape from being cast away, by a leak springing up in the vessel.—At length, after many perils and struggles, we got to Dublin.—There my father took a large house, furnished it, and in a year and a half's time, spent a great deal of money. In the year 1719, all unhinged again; the regiment was ordered, with many others, to the Isle of Wight, in order to embark for Spain, in the Vigo expedition. We accompanied the regiment, and were driven into Milford-Haven, but landed at Bristol; from thence by land, to Plymouth again, and to the Isle of Wight;—where I remember, we stayed encamped some time before the embarkation of the troops—(in this expedition from Bristol to Hampshire, we lost poor Joram, a pretty boy, four years old, of the small-pox)—my mother, sister, and myself, remained at the Isle of Wight, during the Vigo expedition, and until the regiment had got back to Wicklow, in Ire-

land; from whence my father sent for us.—We had poor Joram's loss supplied, during our stay in the Isle of Wight, by the birth of a girl, Anne, born September 23, 1719.—This pretty blossom fell, at the age of three years, in the barracks of Dublin. She was, as I well remember, of a fine delicate frame, not made to last long—as were most of my father's babes. We embarked for Dublin, and had all been cast away by a most violent storm; but, through the intercessions of my mother, the captain was prevailed upon to turn back into Wales, where we stayed a month, and at length got to Dublin, and travelled by land to Wicklow, where my father had for some weeks given us over for lost. We lived in the barracks at Wicklow one year—(one thousand seven hundred and twenty) when Devijcher (so called after Colonel Devijcher) was born: from thence we decamped to stay half a year with Mr. Featherston, a clergyman, about seven miles from Wicklow; who, being a relation of my mother's, invited us to his parsonage at Animo. It was in this parish, during our stay that I had that wonderful escape in falling through a mill-race whilst the mill was going, and of being taken up unhurt; the story is incredible, but known for truth in all that part of Ireland, where hundreds of the common people flocked to see me. From hence we followed the regiment to Dublin, where we lay in the barracks a year. In this year (1721) I learned to write, etc. The regiment ordered, in twenty-two, to Carrickfergus, in the north of Ireland. We all de-

camped; but got no farther than Drogheda;—thence ordered to Mullengar, forty miles west; where, by Providence, we stumbled upon a kind relation, a collateral descendant from Archbishop Sterne, who took us all to his castle, and kindly entertained us for a year, and sent us to the regiment to Carrickfergus, loaded with kindnesses, etc. A most rueful and tedious journey had we all (in March) to Carrickfergus, where we arrived in six or seven days.—Little Devijeher here died; he was three years old; he had been left behind at nurse at a farm-house near Wicklow, but was fetched to us by my father the summer after.—Another child sent to fill his place, Susan. This babe, too, left us behind in this weary journey. The autumn of that year, or the spring afterwards, (I forget which) my father got leave of his colonel to fix me at school—which he did near Halifax, with an able master, with whom I stayed some time, till, by God's care of me, my cousin Sterne, of Elvington, became a father to me, and sent me to the University, etc. etc. To pursue the thread of our story, my father's regiment was, the year after, ordered to Londonderry, where another sister was brought forth, Catharine, still living; but most unhappily estranged from me by my uncle's wickedness and her own folly. From this station the regiment was sent to defend Gibraltar, at the siege, where my father was run through the body by Captain Phillips, in a duel (the quarrel began about a goose!); with much difficulty

he survived, though with an impaired constitution, which was not able to withstand the hardships it was put to; for he was sent to Jamaica, where he soon fell by the country fever, which took away his senses first, and made a child of him; and then, in a month or two, walking about continually without complaining, till the moment he sat down in an arm-chair, and breathed his last, which was at Port Antonio, on the north of the island. My father was a little smart man, active to the last degree in all exercises, most patient of fatigue and disappointments, of which it pleased God to give him full measure. He was, in his temper, somewhat rapid and hasty, but of kindly sweet disposition, void of all design, and so innocent in his own intentions, that he suspected no one: so that you might have cheated him ten times in a day, if nine had not been sufficient for your purpose. My poor father died in March, 1731. I remained in Halifax till about the latter end of that year, and cannot omit mentioning this anecdote of myself and school-master:—He had the ceiling of the school-room new white-washed; the ladder remained there, I, one unlucky day, mounted it, and wrote with a brush, in large capital letters, LAU. STERNE, for which the usher severely whipped me. My master was very much hurt at this, and said, before me, that never should that name be effaced, for I was a boy of genius, and he was sure I should come to preferment. This expression made me forget the stripes I had re-

ceived. In the year '32,* my cousin sent me to the University, where I staid some time. 'Twas there that I commenced a friendship with Mr. H——, which has been lasting on both sides. I then came to York, and my uncle got me the living of Sutton; and at York I became acquainted with your mother, and courted her for two years;—she owned she liked me, but thought herself not rich enough, or me too poor, to be joined together. She went to her sister's in S—; and I wrote to her often. I believe then she was partly determined to have me, but would not say so. At her return, she fell into a consumption;—and one evening that I was sitting by her, with an almost broken heart to see her so ill, she said, 'My dear Laurey, I can never be yours, for I verily believe I have not long to live! but I have left you every shilling of my fortune.' Upon that she showed me her will. This generosity overpowered me. It pleased God that she recovered, and I married her in the year 1741. My uncle† and myself were then upon very good terms; for he soon got me the Prebenda-

* He was admitted of Jesus College, in the University of Cambridge, July 6, 1733, under the tuition of Mr. Cannon.
Matriculated March 29, 1735.
Admitted to the degree of B. A., in January 1736.
Admitted M. A., at the commencement of 1740.

† Jaques Sterne, L. L. D. He was Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor and Prebendary of York, Rector of Rise, and Rector of Hornsey cum Riston, both in the East Riding of the county of York. He died June 9, 1759.

ry of York ;—but he quarrelled with me afterwards, because I would not write paragraphs in the newspapers ;—though he was a party-man, I was not, and detested such dirty work, thinking it beneath me. From that period he became my bitterest enemy.* By my wife's means I got the living of Stillington ; a friend of her's, in the south, had promised her, that, if she married a clergyman in Yorkshire, when the living became vacant, he would make her a compliment of it. I remained nearly twenty years at Sutton, doing duty at both places. I had then very good health. Books, painting,† fiddling, and shooting, were my amusements. As to the squire of the parish, I cannot say we were upon a very friendly footing; but at Stillington the family of the C—s showed us every kindness :—'twas most truly agreeable to be within a mile and a half of an amiable family, who were ever cordial friends. In the year 1760, I took a house at York for your mother and yourself, and went up to London to publish‡ my first two volumes of Shandy.§ In that year, Lord Falconbridge pre-

* It hath, however, been insinuated, that he for some time wrote a periodical electioneering paper at York, in defence of the Whig interest.—*Monthly Review*, vol. 53, p. 344.

† A specimen of Mr. Sterne's abilities in the art of designing may be seen in Mr. Wodhul's poems, 8vo. 1772.

‡ The first edition was printed the preceding year at York.

§ The following is the order in which Mr. Sterne's publications appeared:

1747. The Case of Elijah and the Widow of Zerephath considered, A Charity Sermon, preached on Good Friday, April 17, 1747, for the support of two Charity Schools in York.

sented me with the curacy of Coxwould; a sweet retirement in comparison of Sutton. In '62, I went to France, before the peace was concluded, and you both followed me. I left you both in France, and in two years after I went to Italy, for the recovery of my health; and, when I called upon you, I tried to engage your mother to return to England with me;* she and yourself are at length come, and I have had the inexpressible joy of seeing my girl every thing I wished for.

"*I have set down these particulars relating to my family and self, for my Lydia, in case hereafter she might have a curiosity, or a kinder motive, to know them.*"

To these notices, the following brief account of his death, has ben added by another writer :—

1750. The Abuses of Conscience. Set forth in a Sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of St. Peter's, York, at the Summer Assizes, before the Hon. Mr. Baron Clive, and the Hon. Mr. Baron Smythe, on Sunday, July 29, 1750.

1759. Vol. 1 and 2 of Tristram Shandy.

1760. Vol. 1 and 2 of Sermons.

1761. Vol. 3 and 4 of Tristram Shandy.

1762. Vol. 5 and 6 of Tristram Shandy.

1765. Vol. 7 and 8 of Tristram Shandy.

1766. Vol. 3, 4, 5, and 6, of Sermons.

1767. Vol. 9 of Tristram Shandy.

1768. The Sentimental Journey.

The remainder of his works were published after his death.

* From this passage, it appears that the present account of Mr. Sterne's life and family was written about six months only before his death.

"As Mr. Sterne in the foregoing narrative, hath brought down the account of himself until within a few months of his death, it remains only to mention, that he left York about the end of the year 1767, and came to London in order to publish *The Sentimental Journey*, which he had written during the preceding summer, at his favourite living of Coxwould. His health had been for some time declining; but he continued to visit his friends, and retained his usual flow of spirits. In Feb. 1768, he began to perceive the approaches of death; and with the concern of a good man, and the solicitude of an affectionate parent, devoted his attention to the future welfare of his daughter. His letters at this period reflect so much credit on his character, that it is to be lamented some others in the collection were permitted to see the light. After a short struggle with his disorder, his debilitated and worn-out frame submitted to fate on the 18th day of March, 1768, at his lodgings in Bond Street. He was buried at the new burying ground, belonging to the Parish of St. George, Hanover Square, on the 22d of the same month, in the most private manner; and hath since been indebted to strangers for a monument very unworthy of his memory: on which the following lines are inscribed:—

Near to this place
Lies the body of
The Rev. Laurence Sterne, A. M.
Died September 13, 1768,*
Aged 53 years.

* It is scarcely necessary to observe that this date is erroneous.

To these memoirs we can only add a few circumstances. The Archbishop of York, referred to as great grandfather of the Author, was Dr. Richard Sterne, who died in June, 1683. The family came from Suffolk to Nottinghamshire, and are described by Guillam as bearing, Or a Cheveron, between three crosses flory sable. The crest is that Starling proper, which the pen of Yorick has rendered immortal.

Sterne was educated at Jesus College, Cambridge, and took the degree of M.A. there in 1740. His protector and patron, in the outset of life, was his uncle Jaques Sterne, D.D., who was Prebendary of Durham, Canon Residentiary, Precentor, and Prebendary, of York with other good preferments; Dr. Sterne was a keen Whig, and zealous supporter of the Hanoverian succession. The politics of the times being particularly violent, he was engaged in many controversies, particularly with Dr. Richard Burton (the original of Dr. Slop), whom he had arrested upon a charge of high-treason, during the affair of 1745. Laurence Sterne, in the Memoir which precedes these notices, represents himself as having quarrelled with his uncle, because he would not assist him with his pen in controversies of this description.

When settled in Yorkshire, Sterne has represented his time as much engaged with books, fiddling, and painting. The former seem to have been in a great measure supplied by the library of Skelton Castle, the abode of his intimate friend and relation, John Hall Stevenson, author of the witty and indecent collec-

tion, entitled *Crazy Tales*, where there is a very humorous description of his ancient residence, under the name of Crazy Castle. This library had the same cast of antiquity which belonged to the castle itself, and doubtless contained much of that rubbish of ancient literature in which the labour and ingenuity of Sterne contrived to find a mine. Until 1759, Sterne had only printed two sermons; but in that year he surprised the world, by publishing the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy.* Sterne states himself, in a letter to a friend, as being "tired of employing his brains for other people's advantage —a foolish sacrifice I have made for some years to an ungrateful person."—This passage probably alludes to his quarrel with his uncle; and as he mentions having taken a small house in York, for the education of his daughter, it is probable that he looked to his pen for some assistance, though, in a letter to a nameless doctor, who had accused him of writing in order to have *nummum in loculo*, he declares he wrote not to be fed, but to be famous. *Tristram*, however, procured the author both fame and profit. The brilliant genius which mingled with so much real or affected eccentricity—the gaping astonishment of the readers who could not conceive the drift or object of the publication, with the ingenuity of those who attempted to discover the meaning of passages which really had none, gave the book a most extraordinary degree of *eclat.* But the applause of the public was not unmingled with censure. Sterne was not on

good terms with his professional brethren: he had too much wit, and too little forbearance in the use of it; too much vivacity, and too little respect for his cloth and character, to maintain the formalities, not to say the decencies, of the clerical station; and he had, in the full career, of his humour, assigned to some of his grave compeers ridiculous epithets and characters which they did not resent the less, that they were certainly witty, and probably applicable. Indeed, to require a man to pardon an insult on account of the wit which accompanies the infliction, although it is, what jesters often seem to expect, is desiring him to admire the painted feathers which wing the dart by which he is wounded. The tumult was therefore loud on all sides; but amid shouts of applause and cries of censure the notoriety of *Tristram* spread still wider and wider, and the fame of Sterne rose in proportion. The author therefore triumphed and bid the critics defiance. "I shall be attacked and pelted," he says, in one of his letters, "either from cellar or garret, write what I will; and besides, must expect to have a party against me of many hundreds, who either do not, or will not, laugh —'tis enough that I divide the world—at least I will rest contented with it." On another occasion, he says, "If my enemies knew that, by this rage of abuse and ill-will, they were effectually serving the interest both of myself and works, they would be more quiet; but it has been the fate of my betters, who have found the way to fame is like the way to heaven,

through much tribulation; and till I shall have the honour to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue humble, for I have not filled up the measure of half their persecutions."

The author went to London to enjoy his fame and met with that attention which the public gives to men of notoriety. He boasts of being engaged fourteen dinners deep, and received the hospitality as a tribute; while his contemporaries saw the festivity in a very different light. "Any man who has a name, or who has the power of pleasing," said Johnson, "will be very generally invited in London. The *man Sterne*, I am told, has had engagements for three months." Johnson's feelings of morality and respect for the priesthood led him to speak of Sterne with contempt; but, when Goldsmith added, "and a very dull fellow," he replied, with his emphatic "Why, no, sir."

The first two volumes of *Tristram* proved introductors—singular in their character, certainly—to two volumes of sermons which the simple name of the Reverend Laurence Sterne (ere yet he became known as the author of a fine novel) would never have recommended to notice, but which were sought for and read eagerly under that of Yorick. They maintained the character of the author for wit, genius, and eccentricity.

The third and fourth volumes of *Tristram* appeared in 1761, and the fifth and sixth in 1762. Both these publications were as popular as the first two volumes. The seventh and eighth, which came forth in

1765, did not attract so much attention. The novelty was in a great measure over; and, although they contain some of the most beautiful passages that ever fell from the author's pen, yet neither Uncle Toby nor his faithful attendant were sufficient to attract the public attention in the same degree as before. Thus the popularity of this singular work was, for a time, impeded by that singular and affected style, which had at first attracted by its novelty but which ceased to please when it was no longer new. Four additional volumes of sermons appeared in 1766; and, in 1767, the ninth and last volume of *Tristram Shandy.* "I shall publish," he says, "but one this year; and the next I shall begin a new work of four volumes, which, when finished, I shall continue *Tristram* with fresh spirit."

The new work was unquestionably his *Sentimental Journey;* for which, according to the evidence of La Fleur, Sterne had made much larger collections than were ever destined to see the light. The author's health was now become extremely feeble, and his Italian travels were designed, if possible, to relieve his consumptive complaints. The remedy proved unsuccessful; yet he lived to arrive in England, and to prepare for the press the first part of the *Sentimental Journey,* which was published in 1768.

In this place we may insert with propriety those notices of Sterne and his valet La Fleur, which appear in Mr. Davis's interesting selection of anecdotes, which he has entitled an *Olio.*

"La Fleur was born in Burgundy: when a mere child, he conceived a strong passion to see the world, and at eight years of age ran away from his parents. His prevenancy was always his passport, and his wants were easily supplied—milk, bread, and a straw-bed amongst the peasantry, were all he wanted for the night, and in the morning he wished to be on his way again. This rambling life he continued till he attained his tenth year, when, being one day on the Pont-Neuf, at Paris, surveying with wonder the objects that surrounded him, he was accosted by a Drummer, who easily enlisted him in the service. For six years La Fleur beat his drum in the French army; two years more would have entitled him to his discharge, but he preferred anticipation, and exchanging his dress with a peasant, easily made his escape. By having recourse to his old expedients, he made his way to Montreuil, where he introduced himself to Varenne, who fortunately took a fancy to him. The little accommodations he needed were given to him with cheerfulness; and, as what we sow we wish to see flourish, this worthy landlord promised to get him a master; and as he deemed the best not better than La Fleur merited, he promised to recommend him to *un milord angalis.* He fortunately could perform as well as promise, and he introduced him to Sterne, ragged as a colt, but full of health and hilarity. The little picture which Sterne has drawn of La Fleur's amours is so far true—He was fond of a very pretty girl at Montrueil, the elder of two sisters, who if liv-

ing, he said, resembled the Maria of Moulines; her he afterwards married, and whatever proof it might be of his affection, was none of his prudence, for it made him not a jot richer or happier than he was before. She was a mantuamaker, and her closest application could produce no more than *six sous* a day. Finding that her assistance could go little towards their support, and after having had a daughter by her, they seperated, and he went to service. At length, with what money he had got together by his servitude, he returned to his wife, and they took a public-house in Royal-Street, Calais.—There ill-luck attended him,—war broke out, and the loss of the English sailors, who navigated the packets, and who were his principal customers, so reduced his little business, that he was obliged again to quit his wife, and confide to her guidance the little trade which was insufficient to support them both. He returned in March, 1783, but his wife had fled. A strolling company of comedians passing through the town had seduced her from her home, and no tale or tidings of her have ever since reached him. From the period he lost his wife, says our informant, he has frequently visited England, to whose natives he is extremely partial, sometimes as a sergeant, at others as an express. Where zeal and diligence were required La Fleur was never yet wanting."

In addition to La Fleur's account of himself (continues Mr. Davis), the writer of the preceding obtained from him several little circumstances relative

to his master, as well as the characters depicted by him, a few of which, as they would lose by abridgement, I shall give *verbatim.*

"There were moments," said La Fleur, "in which my master appeared sunk into the deepest dejection —when his calls upon me for my services were so seldom that I sometimes apprehensively pressed in upon his privacy, to suggest what I thought might divert his melancholy. He used to smile at my well-meant zeal, and I could see, was happy to be relieved. At others he seemed to have received a new soul—he launched into the levity natural *a mon pays,*" said La Fleur, "and cried gaily enough, '*vive la bagatelle!*' It was in one of those moments that he became acquainted with the *grisette* at the glove-shop—she afterwards visited him at his lodgings, upon which La Fleur made not a single remark; but on naming the *fille de chambre,* his other visitant, he exclaimed, 'It was certainly a pity she was so pretty and *petite.*'"

The lady mentioned under the initial L. was the Marquis Lamberti; to the interest of this lady he was indebted for the passport, which began to make him seriously uneasy. Count de B. (Breteuil), notwithstanding the Shakspeare, La Fleur thinks, would have troubled himself little about him. Choiseul was minister at that time.

"*Poor Maria*

Was, alas! no fiction.—When we came up to her, she was grovelling in the road like an infant, and

throwing dust upon her head—and yet few were more lovely. Upon Sterne's accosting her with tenderness, and raising her in his arms, she collected herself, and resumed some composure—told him her tale of misery, and wept upon his breast—my master sobbed aloud. I saw her gently disengage herself from his arms, and she sung him the service to the virgin; my poor master covered his face with his hands, and walked by her side to the cottage where she lived: there he talked earnestly to the old woman."

"Every day," said La Fleur, "while we stayed there, I carried them meat and drink from the hotel, and when we departed from Moulines, my master left his blessings and some money with the mother."—"How much," added he, "I know not—he always gave more than he could afford."

Sterne was frequently at a loss upon his travels for ready money. Remittances were become interrupted by war, and he had wrongly estimated his expenses; he had reckoned along the post-roads, without adverting to the wretchedness that was to call upon him in his way.

"At many of our stages my master has turned to me with tears in his eyes—'These poor people oppress me, La Fleur; how shall I relieve them?' He wrote much, and to a late hour." I told La Fleur of the inconsiderable quantity he had published; he expressed extreme surprise. "I know," said he, "upon our return from this tour, there was a large trunk

completely filled with papers." "Do you know any thing of their tendency, La Fleur?" "Yes, they were miscellaneous remarks upon the manners of the different nations he visited; and, in Italy, he was deeply engaged in making the most elaborate inquiries into the different governments of the towns, and the characteristic peculiarities of the Italians of the various states."

To effect this, he read much; for the collections of the patrons of literature were open to him; he observed more. Singular as it may seem, Sterne endeavoured in vain to speak Italian. His valet acquired it on their journey; but his master, though he applied now and then, gave it up at length as unattainable.—"I the more wondered at this," said La Fleur, "as he must have understood Latin."

The assertion, sanctioned by Johnson, that Sterne was licentious and dissolute in conversation, stands thus far contradicted by the testimony of La Fleur: "His conversation with women," he said, "was of the most interesting kind; he usually left them serious, if he did not find them so."

The Dead Ass

Was no invention. The mourner was as simple and affecting as Sterne has related. La Fleur recollected the circumstance perfectly.

To Monks

Sterne never exhibited any particular sympathy. La Fleur remembered several pressing in upon him,

to all of whom his answer was the same—*Mon pere, je suis occupe. Je suis pauvre comme vous.*

In Febuary, 1768, Laurence Sterne, his frame exhausted by long debilitating illness, expired at his lodgings, in Bond-street, London. There was something in the manner of his death, singularly resembling the particulars detailed by Mrs. Quickly, as attending that of Falstaff, the compeer of Yorick for infinite jest, however unlike in other particulars. As he lay on his bed totally exhausted, he complained that his feet were cold, and requested the female attendant to chafe them. She did so, and it seemed to relieve him. He complained that the cold came up higher; and whilst the assistant was in the act of chafing his ancles and legs, he expired without a groan. It was also remarkable that his death took place much in the manner which he himself had wished; and that the last offices were rendered him, not in his own house, or by the hand of kindred affection, but in an inn, and by strangers.

We were well acquainted with Sterne's features and personal appearance, to which he himself frequently alludes. He was tall and thin, with a hectic and consumptive appearance. His features, though capable of expressing, with peculiar effect, the sentimental emotions by which he was often affected, had also a shrewd, humorous, and sarcastic expression, proper to the wit and the satirist. His conversation was ani-

mated and witty; but Johnson complained that it was marked by license, better suiting the company of the Lord of Crazy Castle, than of the great Moralist. It has been said, and probably with truth, that his temper was variable and unequal, the natural consequence of irritable temperament, and continued bad health. But we will not readily believe that the parent of Uncle Toby could be a harsh, or habitually a bad-humoured man. Sterne's letters to his friends, and especially to his daughter, breathe all the fondness of affection; and his resources, such as they were, seem to have been always at the command of those whom he loved.

If we consider Sterne's reputation as chiefly founded upon *Tristram Shandy*, he must be considered as liable to two severe charges;—those, namely, of indecency, and of affectation. Upon the first accusation Sterne himself was peculiarly sore, and used to justify the licentiousness of his humour by representing it as a mere breach of decorum, which had no perilous consequence to morals. The following anecdote we have from a sure source. Soon after *Tristram* had appeared, Sterne asked a Yorkshire lady of fortune and condition whether she had read his book. "I have not, Mr. Sterne," was the answer; "and to be plain with you, I am informed it is not proper for female perusal."—"My dear good lady," replied the author, "do not be gulled by such stories; the book is like your young heir there, (pointing to a child of three years old, who was rolling on the carpet in his

white tunics) he shows at times a good deal that is usually concealed, but it is all in perfect innocence!" This witty excuse may be so far admitted; for it cannot be said that the licentious humour of *Tristram Shandy* is of the kind which applies itself to the passions, or is calculated to corrupt society. But it is a sin against taste, if allowed to be harmless as to morals. A handful of mud is neither a firebrand nor a stone; but to fling it about in sport, argues a coarseness of taste, and want of common manners.

Sterne, however, began and ended by braving the censure of the world in this particular. A remarkable passage in one of his letters shows how lightly he was disposed to esteem the charge; and what is singular enough, his plan for turning it into ridicule seems to have been serious. "Crebillon (*le fils*) has made a convention with me, which, if he is not too lazy, will be no bad *persiflage*. As soon as I get to Toulouse he has agreed to write me an expostulatory letter on the indecencies of *Tristram Shandy*—which is to be answered by recrimination upon the liberties in his own works. These are to be printed together—Crebillon against Sterne—Sterne against Crebillon—the copy to be sold, and the money equally divided: this is good Swiss policy."

In like manner, the greatest admirers of Sterne must own that his style is affected, eminently, and in a degree which even his wit and pathos are inadequate to support. The style of Rabelais, which he assumed for his model, is to the highest excess rambling, excur-

sive, and intermingled with the greatest absurdities. But Rabelais was in some degree compelled to adopt this harlequin's habit, in order that, like licensed jesters, he might, under the cover of his folly, have permission to vent his satire against church and state. Sterne assumed the manner of his master, only as a mode of attracting attention, and of making the public stare; and, therefore, his extravagances, like those of a feigned madman, are cold and forced, even in the midst of his most irregular flights. A man may, in the present day, be, with perfect impunity, as wise or as witty as he can, without assuming the cap and bells of the ancient jester as an apology; and, that Sterne chose voluntarily to appear under such a disguise, must be set down as mere affectation, and ranked with the tricks of black or marbled pages, as used merely *ad captandum vulgus.* All popularity thus founded, carries in it the seeds of decay; for eccentricity in composition, like fantastic modes of dress, however attractive when first introduced, is sure to be caricatured by stupid imitators, to become soon unfashionable, and of course to be neglected.

If we proceed to look more closely into the manner of composition which Sterne thought proper to adopt, we find a sure guide in the ingenious Dr. Ferriar, of Manchester, who, with most singular patience, has traced our author through the hidden sources whence he borrowed most of his learning, and many of his most striking and peculiar expressions. Rabelais (much less read than spoken of) the lively but licen-

tious miscellany called *Moyen de parvenir*, and D'Aubigne's *Baren de Fæneste*, with many other forgotten authors of the sixteenth century; were successively laid under contribution. Burton's celebrated work on Melancholy, (which Dr. Ferriar's Essay instantly raised to double price in the book-market) afforded Sterne an endless mass of quotations, with which he unscrupulously garnished his pages, as if they had been collected in the course of his own extensive reading. The style of the same author, together with that of Bishop Hall, furnished the author of *Tristram* with many of those whimsical expressions, similes, and illustrations, which were long believed the genuine productions of his own eccentric wit. For proofs of this sweeping charge, we must refer the readers to Dr. Ferriar's well-known Essay aud Illustrations, as he delicately terms them, of Sterne's Writings, in which it is clearly shown, that he, whose manner and style were so long thought original, was, in fact, the most unhesitating plagiarist who ever cribbed from his predecessors in order to garnish his own pages. It must be owned, at the same time, that Sterne selects the materials of his mosaic work with so much art, places them so well, and polishes them so highly, that in most cases we are disposed to pardon the want of originality, in consideration of the exquisite talent with which the borrowed materials are wrought up into the new form.

One of Sterne's most singular thefts, considering the tenor of the passage stolen, is his declamation

against literary depredators of his own class: "Shall we," says Sterne, "forever make new books, as apothecaries make new medicines, by pouring only out of one vessel into another? Are we forever to be twisting and untwisting the same rope—forever in the same track—forever at the same pace?" The words of Burton are, "As apothecaries, we make new mixtures, every day pour out of one vessel into another; and as the Romans robbed all the cities in the world to set out their bad-sited Rome, we skim the cream of other men's wits, pick the choice flowers of their tilled gardens, to set out our own sterile plots. We weave the same web, still twist the same rope again and again." We cannot help wondering at the coolness with which Sterne could transfer to his own work so eloquent a tirade against the very arts which he was practising.

Much has been said about the right of an author to avail himself of his predecessors' labours; and, certainly, in a general sense, he that revives the wit and learning of a former age, and puts it in a form likely to captivate his own, confers a benefit on his contemporaries. But to plume himself with the very language and phrases of former writers, and to pass their wit and learning for his own, was the more unworthy in Sterne, as he had enough of original talent, had he chosen to exert it, to have dispensed with all such acts of literary petty larceny.

Tristram Shandy is no narrative, but a collection of scenes, dialogues and portraits, humorous or affect-

ing, intermixed with much wit and with much learning, original or borrowed. It resembles the irregularities of a gothic room, built by some fanciful collector, to contain the miscellaneous remnants of antiquity which his pains have accumulated, and bearing as little proportion in its parts, as the pieces of rusty armour with which it is decorated. Viewing it in this light, the principal figure is Mr. Shandy the elder, whose character is formed, in many respects, upon that of Martinus Scriblerus. The history of Martin was designed by the celebrated club of wits, by whom it was commenced, as a satire upon the ordinary pursuits of learning and science. Sterne, on the contrary, had no particular object of ridicule; his business was only to create a person, to whom he could attach the great quantity of extraordinary reading, and antiquated learning which he had collected. He, therefore, supposed in Mr. Shandy a man of an active and metaphysical, but at the same time, a whimsical cast of mind, whom too much and too miscellaneous learning had brought within a step or two of madness, and who acts, in the ordinary affairs of life, upon the absurd theories adopted by the pedants of past ages. He is most admirably contrasted with his wife, well described as a good lady of the true *poco-curante* school, who neither obstructed the progress of her husband's hobby-horse, to use a phrase which Sterne has rendered classical, nor could be prevailed upon to spare him the least admiration for the grace and dexterity with which he managed it.

Yorick, the lively, witty, sensitive, and heedless parson, is the well-known personification of Sterne himself, and undoubtedly, like every portrait of himself, drawn by a master of the art, bore a strong resemblance to the original. Still, however, there are shades of simplicity thrown into the character of Yorick, which did not exist in that of Sterne. We cannot believe that the jests of the latter were so void of malice prepense, or that his satire entirely flowed out of honesty of mind and mere jocundity of humour. It must be owned, moreover, that Sterne was more likely to have stolen a passage out of Stevinus, if he could have found one to his purpose, than to have left one of his manuscripts in the volume, with the careless indifference of Yorick. Still however, we gladly recognize the general likeness between the author and the child of his fancy, and willingly pardon the pencil which in the delicate task of self delineation, has softened some traits, and improved others.

Uncle Toby, with his faithful squire, the most delightful characters in the work, or perhaps in any other, are drawn with such a pleasing force and discrimination that they more than entitle the author to a free pardon for his literary speculations, his indecorum, and his affectation; nay, authorize him to leave the court of criticism, not forgiven only, but applauded and rewarded, as one who has exalted and honoured humanity, and impressed upon his readers

such a lively picture of kindness and benevolence, blended with courage, gallantry, and simplicity, that their hearts must be warmed by it whenever it is recalled to memory. Sterne, indeed, might boldly plead in his own behalf that the passages which he borrowed from others were of little value, in comparison to those which are exclusively original; and that the former might have been written by many persons, while in his own proper line he stands alone and inimitable. Something of extravagance may, perhaps, attach to uncle Toby's favourite amusements. Yet in England, where men think and act with little regard to the ridicule or censure of their neighbours, there is no impossibility, perhaps no great improbability, in supposing, that a humourist might employ such a mechanical aid as my Uncle's bowling-green, in order to encourage and assist his imagination, in the pleasing but delusive task of castle building. Men have been called children of a larger growth, and among the antic toys and devices with which they are amused, the device of my uncle, with whose pleasures we are so much disposed to sympathize, does not seem so unnatural upon reflection, as it may appear at first sight.

It is well known (through Dr. Ferriar's labours) that Dr. Slop, with all his obstetrical engines, may be identified with Dr. Burton, of York who published a treatise of Midwifery in 1751. This person, as we have elsewhere noticed, was on bad terms with Sterne's uncle; and though there had come strife and unkind-

ness between the uncle and the nephew, yet the latter seems to have retained aversion against the enemy of the former. But Sterne, being no politician, had forgiven the Jacobite, and only persecutes the Doctor with his railery, as a quack and a catholic.

It is needless to dwell longer on a work so generally known. The style employed by Sterne is fancifully ornamented, but at the same time vigorous and masculine, and full of that animation and force which can only be derived by an intimate acquaintance with the early English prose-writers. In the power of approaching and touching the finer feelings of the heart, he has never been excelled, if indeed, he has ever been equalled; and may be at once recorded as one of the most affected, and one of the most simple writers—as one of the greatest plagiarists, and of the most original geniuses whom England has produced. Dr. Ferriar, who seemed born to trace and detect the various mazes through which Sterne carried on his depredations upon ancient and dusty authors, apologizes for the rigour of his inquest, by doing justice to those merits which were peculiarly our author's own. We cannot better close this article than with the sonnet in which his ingenious inquisitor makes the *amende honorable* to the shade of Yorick.

"Sterne, for whose sake I plod through miry ways,
Of antique wit and quibbling mazes drear,
Let not thy shade malignant censure fear,
Though ought of borrowed mirth my search betrays.
Long slept that mirth in dust of ancient days;

(Erewhile to Guise or wanton Valois dear)
Till waked by thee, in Skelton's joyous pile,
She flung on Tristram her capricious rays;
But the quick tear that checks our wondering smile,
In sudden pause, or unexpected story,
Owns thy true mastery—and Lefever's woes,
Maria's wanderings, and the prisoner's throes,
Fix thee conspicuous on the throne of glory."

MRS. ANN RADCLIFFE.

The life of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, spent in the quiet shade of domestic privacy, and in the interchange of familiar affections and sympathies, appears to have been as retired and sequestered, as the fame of her writings was brilliant and universal. The most authentic account of her birth, and family, and personal appearance, seems to be that contained in the following communication to a work of a contemporary biography.

"She was born in London, in the year 1764 (9th July); the daughter of William and Ann Ward, who, though in trade, were nearly the only persons of their two families not living in handsome, or at least easy independence. Her paternal grandmother was a Cheselden, the sister of the celebrated surgeon, of whose kind regard her father had a grateful recollection, and some of whose presents, in books, I have seen. The late Lieutenant Colonel Cheselden, of Somerby, in Leicestershire, was, I think, another nephew of the surgeon. Her father's aunt, the late Mrs. Barwell, first of Leicester, and then of Duffield in Derbyshire, was one of the sponsors at her bap-

tism. Her maternal grandmother was Ann Oates, the sister of Dr. Samuel Jebb, of Stratford, who was the father of Sir Richard: on that side she was also related to Dr. Halifax, bishop of Gloucester, and to Dr. Halifax, physician to the king. Perhaps it may gratify curiosity to state farther, that she was descended from a near relative of the De Witts of Holland. In some family papers which I have seen, it is stated, that a De Witt of the family of John and Cornelius, came to England, under the patronage of government, upon some design of draining the fens in Lincolnshire, bringing with him a daughter, Amelia, then an infant. The prosecution of the plan is supposed to have been interrupted by the rebellion, in the time of Charles the first; but De Witt appears to have passed the remainder of his life in a mansion near Hull, and to have left many children, of whom Amelia was the mother of one of Mrs. Radcliffe's ancestors.

"This admirable writer, whom I remember, from about the time of her twentieth year, was, in her youth, of a figure exquisitely proportioned, while she resembled her father, and his brother and sister, in being low of stature. Her complexion was beautiful, as was her whole countenance, especially her eyes, eyebrows, and mouth. Of the faculties of her mind, let her works speak. Her tastes were such as might be expected from those works. To contemplate the glories of creation, but more particularly the grander features of their display, was one of her chief de-

lights: to listen to fine music was another. She had also a gratification in listening to any good verbal sounds: and would desire to hear passages repeated from the Latin and Greek classics; requiring, at intervals, the most literal translations that could be given, with all that was possible of their idiom, how much soever the version might be embarrassed by that aim at exactness. Though her fancy was prompt, and she was, as will readily be supposed, qualified in many respects for conversation, she had not the confidence and presence of mind, without which a person conscious of being observed, can scarcely be at ease, except in long-tried society. Yet she had not been without some good examples of what must have been ready conversation, in more extensive circles. Besides that a great part of her youth had been passed in the residences of her superior relatives, she had the advantage of being much loved, when a child, by the late Mr. Bentley; to whom, on the establishment of the fabric known by the name of Wedgwood and Bentley's, was appropriated the superintendence of all that related to form and design. Mr. Wedgwood was the intelligent man of commerce, and the able chemist; Mr. Bentley the man of more general literature, and of taste in the arts. One of her mother's sisters was married to Mr. Bentley; and during the life of her aunt, who was accomplished, 'according to the moderation'—may I say the *wise* moderation?—of that day, the little neice was a favourite guest at Chelsea, and afterwards at Turnham Green, where

Mr. and Mrs. Bentley resided. At their house she saw several persons of distinction for literature; and others who without having been so distinguished, were beneficial objects of attention for their mind and their manners. Of the former class the late Mrs. Montague, and once, I think, Mrs. Piozzi; of the latter, Mrs. Ord. The gentleman called Athenian Stuart, was also a visiter there."

Thus respectably born and connected, Miss Ward, at the age of 23, acquired the name which she made so famous, by marrying William Radcliffe, Esq., graduated at Oxford, and a student of law. He renounced the prosecution of his legal studies, and became afterwards proprietor and editor of the *English Chronicle.*

Thus connected, in a manner which must have induced her to cherish her literary powers, Mrs. Radcliffe first came before the public as a novelist in 1789, only two years after her marriage, and when she was 24 years old. A Romance, entitled the *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, which she then produced gave but moderate intimation of the author's peculiar powers. The scene is laid in Scotland, during the dark ages, but without any attempt to trace either the peculiar manners or scenery of the country: and although, in reading the work with that express purpose, we can now trace some germs of that taste and talent for the wild, romantic, and mysterious, which the authoress afterwards employed with such effect, we cannot consider the work, on the whole, as by

any means worthy of her pen. It is always, however, of consequence to the history of human genius to preserve its earlier efforts, that we may trace, if possible, how the oak at length germinates from the unmarked acorn.

Mrs. Radcliffe's genius was more advantageously displayed in the *Sicilian Romance*, which appeared in 1790, and as we ourselves well recollect, attracted in no ordinary degree the attention of the public. This work displays the exuberance and fertility of imagination, which was the author's principal characteristic. Adventures heaped on adventures, in quick and brilliant succession, with all the hair-breadth charms of escape or capture, hurry the reader along with them, and the imagery and scenery by which the action is relieved, are like those of a splendid oriental tale. Still this work had marked traces of the defects natural to an unpractised author. The scenes were inartificially connected, and the characters hastily sketched, without any attempt at individual distinctions; being cast in the usual mould of ardent lovers, tyrannical parents, with domestic ruffians, guards and others, who had wept or stormed through the chapters of romance without much alteration in their family habits or features, for a quarter of a century before Mrs. Radcliffe's time. Nevertheless, the *Sicilian Romance* attracted much notice among the novel-readers of the day, as far excelling the ordinary meagerness of stale and uninteresting incident with which they were at that time regaled from the

Leadenhall Press. Indeed, the praise may be claimed for Mrs. Radcliffe, of having been the first to introduce into her prose fictions a tone of fanciful description and impressive narrative, which had hitherto been exclusively applied to poetry. Fielding, Richardson, Smollett, even Walpole, though writing upon an imaginative subject, are decidedly prose authors. Mrs. Radcliffe has a title to be considered as the first poetess of romantic fiction, that is, if actual Rhythm shall not be deemed essential to poetry.

The *Romance of the Forest*, which appeared in 1791, placed the author at once in that rank and preeminence in her own particular style of composition, in which her works have ever since maintained her. Her fancy, in this new effort, was more regulated, and subjected to the fetters of a regular story. The persons, too, although perhaps there is nothing very original in the conception, were depicted with skill far superior to that which the author had hitherto displayed, and the work attracted the public attention in proportion. That of La Motte, indeed, is sketched with particular talent, and most part of the interest of the piece depends upon the vacillations of a character who, though upon the whole we may rather term him weak and vicious, than villanous, is, nevertheless, at every moment on the point of becoming an agent in atrocities which his heart disapproves of. He is the exact picture of "the needy man who has known better days," and who, spited at the world, from which he has been expelled with contempt, and condemned

by circumstances to seek an asylum in a desolate castle full of mysteries and horrors, avenges himself, by playing the gloomy despot within his own family, and tyranizing over those who were subjected to him only by their strong sense of duty. A more powerful agent appears on the scene—obtains the mastery over his dark but irresolute spirit, and, by alternate exertion of seduction and terror, compels him to be his agent in schemes against the virtue, and even the life of an orphan, whom he was bound in gratitude, as well as in honour and hospitality, to cherish and protect.

The heroine, too, wearing the usual costume of innocence, purity, and simplicity, as proper to heroines as white gowns are to the sex in general, has some pleasing touches of originality. Her grateful affection for the La Motte family—her reliance on their truth and honour, when the wife had become unkind, and the father treacherous towards her, is an interesting and individual trait in her character.

But although, undoubtedly, the talents of Mrs. Radcliffe, in the important point of drawing and finishing the characters of her narrative, were greatly improved since her earlier attempts, and manifested sufficient power to raise her far above the common crowd of novelists, this was not the department of art on which her popularity rested. The public were chiefly aroused, or rather fascinated, by the wonderful conduct of a story, in which the author so successfully called out the feelings of mystery and of awe, while

chapter after chapter, and incident after incident, maintained the thrilling attraction of awakened curiosity and suspended interest. Of these, every reader felt the force, from the sage in his study, to the group which assembles around the evening taper, to seek a solace from the toils of ordinary life, by an excursion into the regions of imagination. The tale was the more striking, because varied and relieved by descriptions of the ruined mansion, and the forest with which it is surrounded, under so many different points, now pleasing and serene, now gloomy, now terrible—scenes which could only have been drawn by one to whom nature had given the eye of a painter with the spirit of a poet.

In 1793, Mrs. Radcliffe had the advantage of visiting the scenery of the Rhine, and, although we are not positive of the fact, we are strongly inclined to suppose that the *Mysteries of Udolpho* were written, or at least corrected, after the date of this journey; for the mouldering castles of the robber chivalry of Germany, situated on the wild and romantic banks of that celebrated stream, seem to have given a bolder flight to her imagination, and a more glowing character to her colouring, than are exhibited in the *Romance of the Forest.* The scenery on the Lakes of Westmoreland, which Mrs. Radcliffe visited, about the same time, was so highly calculated to awaken her fancy, as nature has in these wild but beautiful regions realized the descriptions in which this authoress loved to indulge. Her remarks upon these countries

were given to the public in 1794, in a very well written work, entitled *A Journey through Holland*, etc.

Much was of course expected from Mrs. Radcliffe's next effort, and the booksellers felt themselves authorized in offering what was then considered as an unprecedented sum, 500*l.* for *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* It often happens, that a writer's previous reputation proves the greatest enemy, which, in a second attempt upon public favour, he has to encounter. Exaggerated expectations are excited and circulated, and criticism, which had been seduced into former approbation by the pleasure of surprise, now stands awakened and alert, to pounce upon every failing. Mrs. Radcliffe's popularity, however, stood the test, and was heightened rather than diminished by *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* The very name was fascinating, and the public, who rushed upon it with all the eagerness of curiosity, rose from it with unsatiated appetite. When a family was numerous, the volumes flew, and were sometimes torn from hand to hand, and the complaints of those whose studies were interrupted, were a general tribute to the genius of the author. One might still be found of a different and higher description, in the dwelling of the lonely invalid, or the neglected votary of celibacy, who was bewitched away from a sense of solitude, of indisposition, of the neglect of the world, or of secret sorrow, by the potent charm of this mighty enchantress. Perhaps the perusal of such works may, without injustice, be compared with the use of opiates, baneful, when habitu-

ally and constantly resorted to, but of a most blessed power in those moments of pain and langour, when the whole head is sore, and the whole heart sick. If those who rail indiscriminately at this species of composition, were to consider the quantity of actual pleasure which it produces, and the much greater proportion of real sorrow and distress which it alleviates, their philanthropy ought to moderate their critical pride, or religious intolerance.

To return to *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* The authoress, pursuing her own favourite bent of composition, and again waving her wand over the world of wonder and imagination, had judiciously used a spell of broader and more potent command. The situation and distresses of the heroines, have here, and in *The Romance of the Forest*, a general aspect of similarity. Both are divided from the object of their attachment by the gloomy influence of unfaithful and oppressive guardians, and both become inhabitants of time-stricken towers, and witnesses of scenes now bordering on the supernatural, and now upon the horrible. But this general resemblance is only such as we love to recognize in pictures which have been painted by the same hand, and as companions for each other. Every thing in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is on a larger and more sublime scale than in *The Romance of the Forest;* the interest is of a more agitating and tremendous nature; the scenery of a wilder and more terrific description; the characters distinguished by fiercer and more gigantic features. Montoni, a desperado,

and captain of Condotieri, stands beside La Motte and his Marquis, like one of Milton's fiends beside a witch's familiar. Adeline is confined within a ruined manor house, but her sister heroine, Emily, is imprisoned in a huge castle, like those of feudal times; the one is attacked and defended by bands of armed mercenary soldiers, the other only threatened by a visit from constables and thief-takers. The scale of the landscape is equally different: the quiet and limited woodland scenery of the one work, forming a contrast with the splendid and high-wrought descriptions of Italian mountain-grandeur which occur in the other.

In general, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was, at its first appearance, considered as a step beyond Mrs. Radcliffe's former work, high as that had justly advanced her. We entertain the same opinion in again reading them both, even after some years interval. Yet there were persons of no mean judgment, to whom the simplicity of *The Romance of the Forest* seemed preferable to the more highly coloured and broader style of *The Mysteries of Udolpho;* and it must remain matter of opinion, whether this preference be better founded than in the partialities of a first love, which in literature, as in life, are often unduly predominant. With the majority of the public, the superior magnificence of landscape, and dignity conception of character, secured the palm for the more recent work.

The fifth production by which Mrs. Radcliffe ar-

rested the attention of the public, was fated to be her last. *The Italian*, which appeared in 1790, was purchased by the booksellers for 800*l.*, and obtained a share of public favour equal to any of its predecessors. Here, too, the author had, with much judgment, taken such a difference, that while employing her own peculiar talent, and painting in the style of which she may be considered the inventor, she cannot be charged with repeating or copying herself. She selected the new and powerful machinery afforded her by the Popish religion, when established in its paramount superiority, and thereby had at her disposal monks, spies, dungeons, the mute obedience of the bigot, the dark and dominating spirit of the crafty priest,—all the thunders of the Vatican, and all the terrors of the Inquisition. This fortunate adoption placed in the hands of the *authoress* a powerful set of agents, who were at once supplied with means and motives for bringing forward scenes of horror; and thus a tinge of probability was thrown over even those parts of the story which are most inconsistent with the ordinary train of human events.

Most writers of romance have been desirous to introduce their narrative to the reader, in some manner which might at once excite interest, and prepare his mind for the species of excitation which it was the author's object to produce. In *The Italian*, this has been achieved by Mrs. Radcliffe with an uncommon degree of felicity, nor is there any part of the ro-

mance itself which is more striking than its impressive commencement.

A party of English travellers visit a Neapolitan church. "Within the shade of a portico, a person with folded arms, and eyes directed towards the ground, was pacing behind the pillars the whole extent of the pavement, and was apparently so engaged by his own thoughts, as not to observe that strangers were approaching. He turned, however, suddenly, as if startled by the sound of steps, and then, without farther pausing, glided to a door that opened into the church and disappeared.

"There was something too extraordinary in the figure of this man, and too singular in his conduct, to pass unnoticed by the visitors. He was of a tall thin figure, bending forward from the shoulders; of a sallow complexion, and harsh features, and had an eye which as it looked up from the cloak that muffled the lower part of his countenance, was expressive of uncommon ferocity.

"The travellers, on entering the church, looked round for the stranger, who had passed thither before them, but he was no where to be seen; and, through all the shade of the long aisles, only one other person appeared. This was a friar of the adjoining convent, who sometimes pointed out to strangers the objects in the church which were most worthy of attention, and who now, with this design, approached the party that had just entered.

"When the party had viewed the different shrines,

and whatever had been judged worthy of observation, and were returning through an obscure aisle towards the portico, they perceived the person who had appeared upon the steps, passing towards a confessional on the left, and, as he entered it, one of the party pointed him out to the friar, and inquired who he was; the friar turning to look after him, did not immediately reply, but, on the question being repeated, he inclined his head, as in a kind of obeisance, and calmly replied, 'He is an assasin.'

"'An assassin!' exclaimed one of the Englishmen; 'an assassin and at liberty!'

"An Italian gentleman, who was of the party smiled at the astonishment of his friend.

"'He has sought sanctuary here,' replied the friar; 'within these walls he may not be hurt.'

"'Do your altars then protect a murderer!' said the Englishman.

"'He could find shelter no where else!' answered the friar meekly.

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"'But observe yonder confessional,' added the Italian, 'that beyond the pillars on the left of the aisle below a painted window. Have you discovered it? The colours of the glass throw, instead of a light, a shade over that part of the church, which, perhaps, prevents your distinguishing what I mean!'

"The Englishman looked whither his friend pointed, and observed a confessional of oak, or some very dark wood, adjoining the wall, and remarked also,

that it was the same which the assassin had just entered; it consisted of three compartments, covered with a black canopy. In the central division was the chair of the confessor, elevated by several steps above the pavement of the church; and on either hand was a small closet or box, with steps leading up to a grated partition, at which the penitent might kneel, and, concealed from observation, pour into the ear of the confessor the consciousness of crimes that lay heavy on his heart.

" 'You observe it?' said the Italian.

" 'I do,' replied the Englishman, 'it is the same which the assassin had passed into, and I think it one of the most gloomy spots I ever beheld; the view of it is enough to strike a criminal with despair!'

" 'We, in Italy, are not so apt to despair,' replied the Italian smilingly.

" 'Well, but what of this confessional?' inquired the Englishman. 'The assassin entered it.'

" 'He has no relation with what I am about to mention,' said the Italian; 'but I wish you to mark the place, because some very extraordinary circumstances belong to it.'

" 'What are they?' said the Englishman.

" 'It is now several years since the confession, which is connected with them, was made at that very confessional,' added the Italian; 'the view of it, and the sight of the assassin, with your surprise at the liberty which is allowed him, led me to a recollection of the story. When you return to the hotel, I will

communicate it to you, if you have no pleasanter mode of engaging your time.'

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"After I have taken another view of this solemn edifice,' replied the Englishman, 'and particularly of the confessional you have pointed to my notice.'

"While the Englishman glanced his eye over the high roofs, and along the solemn perspectives of the Santa del Pianto, he perceived the figure of the assassin stealing from the confessional across the choir, and shocked at again beholding him, he turned his eyes, and hastily quitted the church.

"The friends then separated, and the Englishman, soon after returning to his hotel, received the volume. He read as follows."

This introductory passage, which, for the references which it bears to the story, and the anxious curiosity which it excites in the reader's mind, may be compared to the dark and vaulted gateway of an ancient castle, is followed by a tale of corresponding mystery and terror; in detailing which, the art of Mrs. Radcliffe, who was so great a mistress of throwing her narrative into mystery, affording half intimations of veiled and secret horrors, is used perhaps to the very uttermost. And yet, though our reason ultimately presents us with this criticism, we believe she generally suspends her remonstrance till after the perusal; and it is not until the last page is read, and the last volume closed, that we feel ourselves disposed to censure that which has so keenly interested us.

We become then at length aware, that there is no uncommon merit in the general contrivance of the story; that many of the incidents are improbable, and some of the mysteries left unexplained; yet the impression of general delight which we have received from the perusal, remains unabated, for it is founded on recollection of the powerful emotions of wonder, curiosity, even fear, to which we have been subjected during the the currency of the narrative.

A youth of high birth and noble fortune, becomes enamoured of a damsel of low fortunes, unkown race, and all that portion of beauty and talents which belongs to a heroine of romance. This union is opposed by his family, and chiefly by the pride of his mother, who calls to her aid the real hero of the tale, her confessor, Father Schedoni, a strongly drawn character as ever stalked through the regions of romance, equally detestable for the crimes he has formerly perpetrated, and those which he is willing to commit; formidable from his talents and energy; at once a hypocrite and a profligate, unfeeling, unrelenting, and implacable. With the aid of this agent, Vivaldi, the lover, is thrown into the dungeons of the inquisition, while Ellena, his bride, is carried by the pitiless monk to an obscure den, where, finding the services of an associate likely to foil his expectation, he resolves to murder her with his own hand. Hitherto the story, or at least the situation, is not altogether dissimilar from *The Mysteries of Udolpho;* but the fine scene, where the monk, in the act of raising his arm to murder his

sleeping victim, discovers her to be his own child, is of a new, grand, and powerful character, and the horrors of the wretch, who, on the brink of murder, has but just escaped from committing a crime of yet more exaggerated horror, constitute the strongest painting which has been under Mrs. Radcliffe's pencil, and are well fitted to be actually embodied on canvass by some great master. In the prisons of the inquisition, the terrific Schedoni is met, counterplotted, and at length convicted, by the agency of a being as wicked as himself, who had once enjoyed his confidence. Several of these pauses of breathless suspense are thrown in, during the detail of these intrigues, by which Mrs. Radcliffe knew so well how to give interest to the work.

On reconsidering the narrative, we indeed discover that many of the incidents are imperfectly explained, and that we can distinguish points upon which the authoress had doubtless intended to lay the foundation of something which she afterwards forgot or omitted. Of the first class, is the astonishment testified by the grand inquisitor with such striking effect, when a strange voice was heard, even in the awful presence of that stern tribunal, to assume the task of interrogation proper to its judges. The incident in itself is most impressive. As Vivaldi is blindfolded, and bound upon the rack, the voice of the mysterious agent, who had repeatedly crossed his path, and always eluded his search is heard to mingle in his examination, and strikes the whole assembly with consternation. "'Who

is come amongst us?' he (the grand inquisitor) repeated, in a louder tone. Still no answer was returned; but again a confused murmur sounded from the tribunal, and a general consternation seemed to prevail. No person spoke with sufficient preeminence to be understood by Vivaldi: something extraordinary appeared to be passing, and he awaited the issue with all the patience he could command. Soon after he heard the doors opened, and the noise of persons quitting the chamber. A deep silence followed; but he was certain that the familiars were still beside him, waiting to begin their work of torture." This is all unquestionably very impressive; but no other explanation of the intruder's character is given, than that he is an officer of the Inquisition; a circumstance which may explain his being present at Vivaldi's examination, but by no means his interference with it, against the pleasure of the grand inquisitor. The latter certainly would neither have been surprised at the presence of one of his own officials, nor overawed by his deportment; since the one was a point of ordinary duty, and the other must have been accounted as an impertinence. It may be added, also, that there is no full or satisfactory reason assigned for the fell and unpitying hostility of Zampari to Schedoni, and that the reasons which can be gathered are inadequate and trivial.

We may notice an instance of even greater negligence, in the passage respecting the ruined palace of the Barone de Cambrusca, where the imperfect tale

of horror hinted at by a peasant, the guide of Schedoni, appears to jar upon the galled conscience of the monk, and induces the reader to expect a train of important consequences. Unquestionably, the ingenious authoress had meant this half-told tale to correspond with some particulars in the proposed development of the story, which having been finished more hastily, or in a different manner from what she intended, she had, like a careless knitter, neglected to take up her "loose stitches." It is, however, a baulking of the reader's imagination, which authors in this department would do well to guard against. At the same time, critics are bound in mercy to remember, how much more easy it is to draw a complicate chain of interest, than to disentangle it with perfect felicity. Dryden, it is said, used to curse the inventors of fifth acts in the drama, and romance writers owe no blessings to the memory of him who devised explanatory chapters.

We have been told, that in this beautiful romance, the customs and rules of the Inquisition have been violated; a charge more easily made than proved, and which if true, is of minor importance, because its code is happily but little known to us. It is matter of more obvious criticism, and therefore a greater errour, that the scraps of Italian language introduced to give locality to the scene, are not happily chosen, and savour of affectation. But if Mrs. Radcliffe did not intimately understand the language and manners of Italy, the following extract may prove how well she

knew how to paint Italian scenery, which she could only have seen in the pictures of Claude or Pousson.

"These excursions sometimes led to Puzzuoli, Baia, or the woody cliffs of Pausilippo, and as, on their return, they glided along the moonlight bay, the melodies of Italian strains seemed to give enchantment to the scenery of its shore. At this cool hour the voices of the vine-dressers were frequently heard in trio, as they reposed, after the labour of the day, on some pleasant promontory, under the shade of poplars; or the brisk music of the dance of the fishermen, on the margin of the waves below. The boatmen rested on their oars, while their company listened to voices modulated by sensibility to finer eloquence, than it is in the power of art alone to display; and at others, while they observed the airy natural grace, which distinguishes the dance of the fishermen and peasant girls of Naples. Frequently, as they glided round a promontory, whose shaggy masses impended far over the sea, such magic scenes of beauty unfolded, adorned by these dancing groups on the bay beyond, as no pencil could do justice to. The deep clear waters reflected every image of the landscape; the cliffs, branching into wild forms, crowned with groves, whose rough foliage often spread down their steeps in picturesque luxuriance; the ruined villa, on some bold point, peeping through the trees; peasants' cabins hanging on the precipices, and the dancing figures on the strand—all touched with the silvery tint and soft shadows of moonlight. On the other hand, the sea, trembling with a long

line of radiance and showing in the clear distance the sails of vessels stealing in every direction along its surface, presented a prospect as grand as the landscape was beautiful." There are descriptive passages which like those in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, approach more nearly to the style of Salvator Rosa.

The Italian was received with as much ardour as Mrs. Radcliffe's two previous novels, and it was from no coldness on the part of the public, that, like an actress in full possession of applauded powers, she chose to retreat from the stage in the blaze of her fame. After the publication of *The Italian*, in 1797, the public were not favoured with any more of Mrs. Radcliffe's publications.

We are left in vain to conjecture the reasons, which for more than twenty years, condemned an imagination so fertile, so far as the public were concerned, to sterility. The voice of unfriendly criticism, always as sure an attendant upon merit as envy herself, may perhaps have intimidated the gentleness of her character, or Mrs. Radcliffe, as frequently happens, may have been disgusted at seeing the mode of composition, which she had brought into fashion, profaned by the host of servile imitators who could only copy and render more prominent her defects, without aspiring to her merits. But so steadily did she keep her resolution, that for more than twenty years the name of Mrs. Radcliffe was never mentioned, unless with reference to her former productions, and in general (so retired was the current of her life) there was a belief that Fate had removed her from the scene.

Notwithstanding her refraining from publication, it is impossible to believe that an imagination so strong, supported by such ready powers of expression, should have remained inactive during so long a period; but the manuscripts on which she was occasionally employed have as yet been withheld from the public. We have some reason to believe, that arrangements were at one time almost concluded between Mrs. Radcliffe and a highly respectable publishing house, respecting a poetical romance, but were broken off in consequence of the author changing or delaying her intention of publication. It is to be hoped, that the world will not be ultimately deprived of what undoubtedly must be the source of much pleasure whenever it shall see the light.

The tenor of Mrs. Radcliffe's private life seems to have been peculiarly calm and sequestered. She probably declined the sort of personal notoriety, which, in London society, usually attaches to persons of literary merit; and perhaps no author, whose works were so universally read and admired, was so little personally known, even to the most active of that class of people of distinction, who rest their peculiar pretentions to fashion upon the selection of literary society. Her estate was certainly not the less gracious; and it did not disturb Mrs. Radcliffe's domestic comforts, although many of her admirers believed, and some are not yet undeceived, that, in consequence of brooding over the terrors which she depicted, her reason had at length been overturned, and

that the author of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* only existed as the melancholy inmate of a private madhouse. This report was so generally spread, and so confidently repeated in print, as well as in conversation, that the editor believed it for several years, until, greatly to his satisfaction, he learned, from good authority, that there neither was, nor ever had been, the most distant foundation for this unpleasing rumour.

A false report of another kind gave Mrs. Radcliffe much concern. In Miss Seward's Correspondence, among the literary gossip of the day, it is roundly stated, that the *Plays upon the Passions*, were Mrs. Radcliffe's, and that she owned them. Mrs. Radcliffe was much hurt at being reported capable of borrowing from the fame of a gifted sister; and the late Miss Seward would probably have suffered equally, had she been aware of the pain she inflicted by giving currency to a rumour so totally unfounded. The truth is, that, residing at a distance from the metropolis, and living upon literary intelligence as her daily food, Miss Seward was sometimes imposed upon by those friendly caterers who were more anxious to supply her with the newest intelligence, than solicitous about its accuracy.

During the last twelve years of her life, Mrs. Radcliffe suffered from a spasmodic asthma, which considerably affected her general health and spirits. This chronic disorder took a more fatal turn upon the 9th of January, 1822, and upon the 7th of February following, terminated the life of this ingenious and amiable lady, at her own house in London.

Mrs. Radcliffe, as an author, has the most decided claim to take her place among the favoured few, who have been distinguished as the founders of a class, or school. She led the way in a peculiar style of composition, affecting powerfully the mind of the reader, which has since been attempted by many, but in which no one has attained or approached the excellencies of the original inventor, unless, perhaps, the author of *The Family of Montorio.*

The species of romance which Mrs. Radcliffe introduced bears nearly the same relation to the novel that the modern anomaly entitled a melo-drama does to the proper drama. It does not appeal to the judgment by deep delineations of human feeling, or stir the passions by scenes of deep pathos, or awaken the fancy by tracing out, with spirit and vivacity, the lighter traces of life and manners, or excite mirth by strong representations of the ludicrous or humourous. In other words, it attains its interest neither by the path of tragedy nor of comedy; and yet it has, notwithstanding, a deep, decided, and powerful effect, gained by means independent of both—by an appeal, in one word, to the passion of fear, whether excited by natural dangers, or by the suggestions of superstition. The force therefore of the production, lies in the delineation of external incident, while the characters of the agents, like the figures in many landscapes, are entirely subordinate to the scenes in which they are placed; and are only distinguished by such outlines as make them seem appropriate to the rocks and trees, which have been the artist's principal objects.

The persons introduced,—and here also the correspondence holds betwixt the melo-drama and such romances as *The Mysteries of Udolpho*,—bear the features, not of individuals, but of the class to which they belong. A dark and tyrannical count; an aged crone of a house keeper, the depository of many a family legend; a garrulous waiting-maid; a gay and light-hearted valet; a villain or two of all work; and a heroine, fulfilled with all perfections, and subjected to all manner of hazards, form the stock in trade of a romancer or a melodramatist; and if these personages be dressed in their proper costume, and converse in language sufficiently appropriate to their stations and qualities, it is not expected that the audience shall shake their sides at the humour of the dialogue, or weep over its pathos.

On the other hand, it is necessary that these characters, though not delineated with individual features, should be truly and forcibly sketched in the outline; that their dress and general appearance should correspond with and support the trick of the scene; and that their language and demeanor should either enhance the terrors amongst which they move, or form, as the action may demand, a strong and vivid contrast to them. Mrs. Radcliffe's powers of fancy were particularly happy in depicting such personages, in throwing upon them and their actions just enough of that dubious light which mystery requires, and in supplying them with language and manners which correspond with their situation and business upon the scene. We may take as an example, the admirable description of the

monk Schedoni—"His figure was striking, but not so from grace; it was tall and though extremely thin, his limbs were large and uncouth, and as he stalked along, wrapt in the black garments of his order, there was something terrible in his air; something almost superhuman. His cowl, too, as it threw a shade over the lived paleness of his face, increased its severe character, and gave an effect to his large melancholy eye, which approached to horror. H is was not the melancholy of a sensible wounded heart, but apparently that of a gloomy and ferocious disposition. There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot easily be defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated. An habitual gloom and severity prevailed over the deep lines of his countenance; and his eyes were so piercing, that they seemed to penetrate, at a single glance, into the hearts of men, and to read their most secret thoughts; few persons could support their scrutiny, or even endure to meet them twice. Yet notwithstanding all this gloom and austerity, some rare occasions of interest had called forth a character upon his countenance entirely different; and he could adapt himself to the tempers and passions of persons whom he wished to conciliate with astonishing facility, and generally with complete triumph. This monk, this Schedoni, was the confessor and secret adviser of the Marchessa di Vivaldi."

To draw such portraits as Schedoni's and others which occur in Mrs. Radcliffe's novels, requires no

mean powers; and although they belong rather to romance than to real life, the impression which they make upon the imagination is scarce lessened by the sense that, they are in some sort as fabulous as fairies or ogres. But when the public have been surprised into an universal burst of applause, it is their custom to indemnify themselves by a corresponding degree of censure; just as children, when tired of admiring a new play-thing, find a fresh and distinct pleasure in breaking it to pieces. Mrs. Radcliffe, who had afforded such general delight to the public, was not doomed to escape the common fate; and the criticism with which she was assailed was the more invidious, that it was inflicted in more than one case, by persons of genius who followed the same pursuit with herself. It was the cry, at the period, and has sometimes been repeated since, that the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the applause with which they were received, were evil signs of the times, and argued a great and increasing degradation of the public taste, which instead of banqueting as heretofore upon scenes of passion, like those of Richardson, or of life and manners, as in the pages of Smollett and Fielding, was now coming back to the fare o the nursery, and gorged upon the wild and improbable fictions of an overheated imagination.

But this criticism, when justly examined, will be found to rest chiefly on that deprecating spirit, which would undermine the fair fame of an accomplished writer, by showing that she does not possess the excellencies proper to a style of composition totally dif-

ferent from that which she has attempted. The question is neither, whether the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe possess merits which her plan did not require, nay, almost excluded; nor whether hers is to be considered as a department of fictitious composition, equal in dignity and importance to those where the great ancient masters have long preoccupied the ground. The real and only point is, whether, considered as a separate and distinct species of writing, that introduced by Mrs. Radcliffe possesses merit, and affords pleasure; for, these premises being admitted, it is as unreasonable to complain of the absence of advantages foreign to her style and plan, and proper to those of another mode of composition, as to regret that the peach-tree does not produce grapes, or the vine peaches. A glance upon the face of nature is, perhaps, the best cure for this unjust and unworthy system of criticism. We there behold, that not only each star differs from another in glory, but there is spread over the face of nature a boundless variety; and that as a thousand different kinds of shrubs and flowers not only have beauties independent of each other, but are more delightful from that very circumstance than if they were uniform, so the fields of literature admit the same variety; and it may be said of the Muse of fiction, as well as of her sisters,

Mille habet ornatus, mille decenter habet.

It may be stated, to the additional confusion of such hypercritics as we allude to, that not only does the infinite variety of human tastes require different styles

of composition for their gratification; but if there were to be selected one particular structure of fiction, which possesses charms for the learned and unlearned, the grave and gay, the gentleman and the clown, it would be perhaps that of those very romances which the severity of their criticism seeks to depreciate. There are many men too mercurial to be delighted with Richardson's beautiful, but protracted display of the passions: and there are some too dull to comprehend the wit of Le Sage, or too saturnine to relish the nature and spirit of Fielding: and yet these very individuals will with difficulty be divorced from the *Romance of the Forest*, or *The Mysteries of Udolpho;* for curiosity and a lurking love of mystery, together with a germ of superstition, are more general ingredients in the human mind, and more widely diffused through the mass of humanity, than either taste or feeling. The unknown author of the *Pursuits of Literature*, who in respect to common tales of terror,

> "Boasts an English heart,
> Unused at ghosts or rattling bones to start."

acknowledges, nevertheless, the legitimate character of Mrs. Radcliffe's art, and pays no mean tribute to her skill. Of some sister novelists he talks with slight regard. "Though all of them are ingenious ladies, yet they are too frequently whining and frisking in novels, till our girls' heads turn wild with impossible adventures; and now and then are tainted with democracy. Not so the mighty magician of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, bred and nourished by the Florentine mu-

ses in their sacred solitary caverns, amid the paler shrines of gothic superstition, and in all the dreariness of enchantment; a poetess whom Ariosto would with rapture have acknowledged, as

——— "La nudrita
Damigella Trivulzia al sacro speco."—O.F. c. 46

Mrs. Radcliffe was not made acquainted with this high compliment till long after the satire was published; and its value was enhanced by the author's general severity of judgment, and by his perfect acquaintance with the manners and language of Italy, in which she had laid her scene.

It is further to be observed, that the same class of critics who ridiculed these romances as unnatural and improbable, were disposed to detract from the genius of the author, on account of the supposed facility of her task. Art or talent, they said, was not required to produce that sort of interest and emotion, which is perhaps, after all, more strongly excited by a vulgar legend of a ghost, than by the high painting and labored descriptions of Mrs. Radcliffe. But this criticism is not much better founded than the former. The feelings of suspense and awful attention which she excited, were by means of springs which lie open indeed to the first touch, but which are peculiarly liable to be worn out by repeated pressure. The public soon, like Macbeth, became satiated with horrours, and indifferent to the strongest *stimuli* of that kind. It shows, therefore, the excellence and power of Mrs. Radcliffe's genius that

she was able three times to bring back her readers, with fresh appetite, to a banquet of the same description; while of her numerous imitators, who rang the changes upon old castles and forests, and "antres dire," scarcely one attracted attention, until Mr. Lewis published his *Monk*, several years after she had resigned her pen.

The materials of these celebrated romances and the means employed in conducting the narrative, are all selected with a view to the author's primary object, of moving the reader by ideas of impending danger, hidden guilt, supernatural visitings—by all that is terrible, in short, combined with much that is wonderful. For this purpose, her scenery is generally as gloomy as her tale, and her personages are those at whose frown that gloom grows darker. She has uniformily selected the south of Europe for her place of action, whose passions, like the weeds of the climate, are supposed to attain portentous growth under the fostering sun; which abounds with ruined monuments of antiquity, as well as the more massive remnants of the middle ages, and where feudal tyranny and catholic superstition still continue to exercise their sway over the slave and bigot, and to indulge to the haughty lord, or more haughty priest, that sort of despotic power, the exercise of which, seldom fails to deprave the heart, and disorder the judgment. These circumstances are skilfully selected, to give probability to events, which could not, without great violation of truth, be represented as having taken place in England. Yet, even with the

allowances which we make for foreign minds and manners, the unterminating succession of misfortunes which press upon the heroine, strikes us as unnatural. She is continually struggling with the tide of adversity, and hurried downwards by its torrent; and if any more gay description is occasionally introduced, it is only as a contrast, not a relief, to the melancholy and gloomy tenor of the narrative.

In working upon the sensations of natural and superstitious fear, Mrs. Radcliffe has made much use of obscurity and suspense, the most fertile source, perhaps, of sublime emotion; for there are few dangers that do not become familiar to the firm mind, if they are presented to consideration as certainties, and in all their opened and declared character; whilst, on the other hand, the bravest have shrunk from the dark and the doubtful. To break off the narrative, when it seemed at the point of becoming most interesting—to extinguish a lamp just when a parchment containing some hideous secret ought to have been read, to exhibit shadowy forms and half-heard sounds of wo, were resources which Mrs. Radcliffe has employed with more effect than any other writer of romance. It must be confessed that, in order to bring about these situations, some art or contrivance, on the part of the author, is rather too visible. Her heroines voluntarily expose themselves to situations, which in nature a lonely female would certainly have avoided. They are too apt to choose the midnight hour for investigating the miseries of a deserted chamber or secret pas-

sage, and generally are only supplied with an expiring lamp, when about to read the most interesting documents. The simplicity of the tale is thus somewhat injured—it is as if we witnessed a dressing up of the very phantom by which we are to be startled; and the imperfection, though redeemed by many beauties, did not escape the censure of criticism.

A principal characteristic of Mrs. Radcliffe's romances is the rule which the author imposes upon herself, that all the circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman, were to be accounted for on natural principles, at the winding up of the story. It must be allowed that this has not been done with uniform success, and that the author has been more successful in exciting interest and apprehensions, than in explaining the means she has made use of. Indeed we have already noticed, as the torment of romance writers, those necessary evils, the concluding chapters, when they must unravel the skein of adventures which they have been so industrious to perplex, and account for all the incidents which they have been at so much pains to render unaccountable. Were these great magicians, who deal in the wonderful and fearful, permitted to dismiss their spectres as they raise them, amidst the shadowy and indistinct light so favourable to the exhibition of phantasmagoria, without compelling them into broad daylight, the task were comparatively easy, and the fine fragment of *Sir Bertrand* might have rivals in that department. But the modern author is not permitted to escape in that

way. We are told of a formal old judge, before whom evidence was tendered of the ghost of a murdered person having declared to a witness, that the prisoner at the bar was guilty, who admitted the evidence of the spirit to be excellent, but denied his right to be heard through the mouth of another, and ordered the spectre to be summoned into open court. The present public deal as rigidly, and compel an explanation from the story-teller; and he must either at once consider the knot as worthy of being severed by supernatural aid, and bring on the stage his actual fiend or ghost, or, like Mrs. Radcliffe, refer to natural agency the whole materials of his story.

We have already, in some brief remarks on *The Castle of Otranto*, avowed some preference for the more simple mode of boldly avowing the use of supernatural machinery. Ghosts and witches, and the whole tenets of superstition having once, and at no late period, been matter of universal belief, warranted by legal authority, it would seem no great stretch upon the reader's credulity to require him, while reading of what his ancestors did, to credit for the time what those ancestors devoutly believed in. And yet, notwithstanding the success of Walpole and Maturin, (to whom we may add the author of *Forman*) the management of such machinery must be acknowleged a task of a most delicate nature. "There is but one step," said Buonaparte, "betwixt the sublime and the ridiculous;" and in an age of universal incredulity, we must own it would require, at the present day,

the support of the highest powers, to save the supernatural from slipping into the ludicrous. The *incredulus odi* is a formidable objection.

There are some modern authors, indeed, who have endeavoured, ingeniously enough, to compound betwixt ancient faith and modern incredulity. They have exhibited phantoms, and narrated prophecies strangely accomplished, without giving a defined or absolute opinion, whether these are to be referred to supernatural agency, or whether the apparitions were produced (no uncommon case) by an overheated imagination, and the accompanying presages by a casual, though singular, coincidence of circumstances. This is, however, an evasion of the difficulty, not a solution; and besides, it would be leading us too far from the present subject, to consider to what point the author of a fictitious narrative is bound by his charter to gratify the curiosity of the public, and whether, as a painter of actual life, he is not entitled to leave something in shade, when the natural course of events conceals so many incidents in total darkness. Perhaps, upon the whole, this is the most artful mode of terminating such a tale of wonder, as it forms the means of compounding with the taste of two different classes of readers; those who, like children, demand that each particular circumstance and incident of the narrative shall be fully accounted for; and the more imaginative class, who, resembling men that walk for pleasure through a moonlight landscape, are more teased than edified by the intrusive minuteness with

which some well-meaning companion disturbs their reveries, divesting stock and stone of the shadowy semblances in which fancy had dressed them, and pertinaciously restoring to them the ordinary forms and common-place meanness of reality.

It may indeed be claimed as meritorious in Mrs. Radcliffe's mode of expounding her mysteries, that it is founded in possibilities. Many situations have occurred, highly tinctured with Romantic incident and feeling, the mysterious obscurity of which has afterwards been explained by deception and confederacy. Such have been the impostures of superstition in all ages, and such delusions were also practised by the members of the Secret Tribunal, in the middle ages, and in more modern times by the Rosicrucians and Illuminati, upon whose machinations Schiller has founded the fine romance of *The Ghost-Seer.* But Mrs. Radcliffe has not had recourse to so artificial a solution. Her heroines often sustain the agony of fear, and her readers that of suspense, from incidents which, when explained, appear of an ordinary and trivial nature; and in this we do not greatly applaud her art. A stealthy step behind the arras may, doubtless, in some situations, and when the nerves are tuned to a certain pitch, have no small influence upon the imagination; but if the conscious listener discovers it to be only the noise made by the cat, the solemnity of the feeling is gone, and the visionary is at onec angry with his senses for having been cheated, and with his reason for having acquiesced in the

deception. We fear that some such feeling of disappointment and displeasure attends most readers, when they read for the first time the unsatisfactory solution of the mysteries of the black pall and the wax figure, which has been adjourned from chapter to chapter, like something suppressed, because too horrible for the ear.

There is a separate inconvenience attending a narrative where the imagination has been kept in suspense, and is at length imperfectly gratified by an explanation falling short of what the reader has expected; for in such a case, the interest terminates on the first reading of the volumes, and cannot, so far as it rests upon a high degree of excitation, be recalled upon a second perusal. Mrs. Radcliffe's plan of narrative, happily complicated and ingeniously resolved, continues to please after many readings; for although the interest of eager curiosity is no more, it is supplied by the rational pleasure, which admires the author's art, and traces a thousand minute passages, which render the catastrophe probable, yet escape notice in the eagerness of a first perusal. But it is otherwise when some inadequate cause is assigned for a strong emotion; the reader feels tricked, and like a child who has once seen the scenes of a theatre too nearly, the idea of pasteboard, cords, and pullies, destroys for ever the illusion with which they were first seen from the proper point of view. Such are the difficulties and dilemmas which attend the path of the professed story-teller, who, while it is expected of him that his narrative

should be interesting and extraordinary, is neither permitted to explain its wonders, by referring them to ordinary causes, on account of their triteness, nor to supernatural agency because of its incredibility. It is no wonder that, hemmed in by rules so strict, Mrs. Radcliffe, a mistress of the art of exciting curiosity, has not been uniformly fortunate in the mode of gratifying it.

The best and most admirable specimen of her art is the mysterious disappearance of Ludovico, after having undertaken to watch for a night in a haunted apartment; and the mind of the reader is finely wound up for some strange catastrophe, by the admirable ghost story which he is represented as perusing to amuse his solitude, as the scene closes upon him. Neither can it be denied, that the explanation afforded of this mysterious incident is as probable as romance requires, and in itself completely satisfactory. As this is perhaps the most favourable example of Mrs. Radcliffe's peculiar skill in composition, the incidents of the black veil and the waxen figure may be considered as instances where the explanation falls short of expectation, and disappoints the reader entirely. On the other hand, her art is at once according to the classical precept, exerted and concealed in the beautiful and impressive passage, where the Marchesa is in the choir of the convent of San Nicoli, contriving with the atrocious Schedoni the murder of Ellena.

"'Avoid violence, if that be possible,' she added, immediately comprehending him, 'but let her die quickly! The punishment is due to the crime.'

"The Marchesa happened, as she said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over a confessional, where appeared, in black letters, these awful words, 'God *hears thee!*' It appeared an awful warning; her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. Schedoni was too much engaged by his own thoughts to observe or understand her silence. She soon recovered herself; and, considering that this was a common inscription for confessionals, disregarded what she had at first considered as a peculiar admonition: yet some moments elapsed before she could renew the subject.

"'You were speaking of a place, father,' resumed the Marchesa— 'you mentioned a——'

"'Ay,' muttered the confessor, still musing,—'in a chamber of that house there is——'

"'What noise is that?' said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again.

"'What mournful music is that? said the Marchesa, in a faltering voice; 'it was touched by a fearful hand! Vespers were over long ago!'

"'Daughter,' said Schedoni, somewhat sternly, 'you said you had a man's courage. Alas! you have a woman's heart.'

"'Excuse me father; I know not why I feel this agitation, but I will command it.—That chamber?'

"'In that chamber,' resumed the confessor, is a secret door, constructed long ago.'

"'And for what purpose constructed? said the fearful Marchesa.

"'Pardon me, daughter; 'tis sufficient that it is there; we will make a good use of it. Through that door—in the night—when she sleeps—'

"'I comprehend you,' said the Marchesa, 'I comprehend you! But why—you have your reasons no doubt—but why the necessity of a secret door in a house which which you say is so lonely—inhabited by only one person?'

"'A passage leads to the sea,' continued Schedoni, without replying to the question. 'There on the shore, when darkness covers it; there, plunged amidst the waves, no stain shall hint of———'

"'Hark!' interrupted the Marchesa, starting,' that note again!'

"The organ sounded faintly from the choir, and paused, as before. In the next moment, a slow chanting of voices was heard, mingling with the rising peal, in a strain particularly melancholy and solemn.

"'Who is dead?' said the Marchesa, changing countenance; 'it is a requiem!'

"'Peace be with the departed!' exclaimed Schedoni, and crossed himself; 'peace rest with his soul!

"'Hark! to that chaunt,' said the Marchesa, in a trembling voice; 'it is a first requiem, the soul has but just quitted the body!'

"They listened in silence. The Marchesa was much affected; her complexion varied at every instant; her breathings were short and interrupted, and she even shed a few tears, but they were those of despair, rather than of sorrow."

Mrs. Radcliffe's powers, both of language and description, have been justly estimated very highly. They bear, at the same time, considerable marks of that warm and somewhat exuberant imagination which dictated her works. Some artists are distinguished by precision and correctness of outline, others by the force and vividness of their colouring; and it is to the latter class that this author belongs. The landscapes of Mrs. Radcliffe are far from equal in accuracy and truth to those of her contemporary, Mrs. Charlotte Smith, whose sketches are so very graphical, that an artist would find little difficulty in actually painting from them. Those of Mrs. Radcliffe, on the contrary, while they would supply the most noble and vigorous ideas, for producing a general effect, would leave the task of tracing a distinct and accurate outline to the imagination of the painter. As her story is usually enveloped in mystery, so there is, as it were, a haze over her landscapes, softening indeed the whole, and adding interest and dignity to particular parts, and thereby producing every effect which the author desired, but without communicating any absolutely precise or individual image to the reader. The beautiful description of the Castle of Udolpho, upon Emily's first approach to it, is of this character. It affords a noble subject for the pencil; but were six artists to attempt to embody it, upon canvass, they would probably produce six drawings entirely dissimilar to each other, all of them equally authorized by the printed description, which, although a long one, is so beautiful a specimen of Mrs.

Radcliffe's peculiar talents, that we do not hesitate to insert it.

"Towards the close of the day, the road wound into a deep valley. Mountains, whose shaggy steeps appeared to be inaccessible, almost surrounded it. To the east, a vista opened and exhibited the Appennines in their darkest horrours; and the long perspective of retiring summits rising over each other, their ridges clothed with pines, exhibited a stronger image of grandeur, than any that Emily had yet seen. The sun had just sunk below the top of the mountains she was descending, whose long shadow stretched athwart the valley; but his sloping rays shooting through an opening of the cliffs, touched with a yellow gleam the summits of the forest that hung upon the opposite steeps, and streamed in full splendour upon the towers and battlements of a castle that spread its extensive ramparts along the brow of a precipice above. The splendour of these illumined objects was heightened by the contrasted shade which involved the valley below.

"'There,' said Montoni, speaking for the first time in several hours, 'is Udolpho.'

"Emily gazed with melancholy awe upon the castle which she understood to be Montoni's; for though it was now lighted up by the setting sun, the gothic greatness of its features, and its mouldering walls of dark grey stone, rendered it a gloomy and sublime object. As she gazed the light died away on its walls, leaving a melancholy purple tint, which spread deeper and deeper, as the thin vapour crept up the moun-

tain, while the battlements above were still tipped with splendour. From those, too, the rays soon faded, and the whole edifice was invested with the solemn duskiness of evening. Silent, lonely, and sublime, it seemed to stand the sovereign of the scene, and to frown defiance on all who dared to invade its solitary reign. As the twilight deepened, its features became more awful in obscurity, and Emily continued to gaze till its clustering towers were alone seen rising over the tops of the woods, beneath whose thick shades the carriages soon after began to ascend.

"The extent and darkness of these tall woods awakened terrific images in her mind, and she almost expected to see banditti start up from under the trees. At length the carriages emerged upon a heathy rock and soon after reached the castle gates, where the deep tone of the portal bell, which was struck upon to give notice of their arrival, increased the fearful emotions that had assailed Emily. While they waited till the servant within should come to open the gates, she anxiously surveyed the edifice; but the gloom that overshadowed it, allowed her to distinguish little more than a part of its outline, with the massy walls of the ramparts, and to know that it was vast, ancient, and dreary. From the parts she saw, she judged of the heavy strength and extent of the whole. The gateway before her, leading into the courts, was of gigantic size, and was defended by two round towers, crowned by overhanging turrets, embattled, where, in stead of banners, now waved long grass and wild plants,

that had taken root amongst the mouldering stones and which seemed to sigh, as the wind rolled past, over the desolation around them. The towers were united by a curtain, peirced and embattled also, below which appeared the pointed arch of a huge portcullis, surmounting the gates. From these, the walls of the ramparts extended to other towers, overlooking the precipice, whose shattered outline, appearing on a gleam that lingered in the west, told of the ravages of war.—Beyond these, all was lost in the obscurity of evening."

We think it interesting to compare this splendid and beautiful fancy-picture with the precision displayed by the same author's pencil, when she was actually engaged in copying nature, and probably the reader will be of opinion, that *Udolpho* is a beautiful effect piece, *Hardwick* a striking and faithful portrait.

"Northward, beyond London, we may make one stop, after a country, not otherwise necessary to be noticed, to mention Hardwick in Derbyshire, a seat of the Duke of Devonshire, once the residence of the Earl of Shrewsbury, to whom Elizabeth deputed the custody of the unfortunate Mary. It stands on an easy height, a few miles to the left of the road from Mansfield to Chesterfield, and is approached through shady lanes, which conceal the view of it, till you are on the confines of the park. Three towers of hoary grey then rise with great majesty among old woods and their summits appeared to be covered with the lightly shivered fragments of battlements, which, how-

ever, are soon discovered to be perfectly carved open work, in which the letters E. S. frequently occur under a coronet, the initials, and the memorials of Elizabeth, Countess of Shrewsbury, who built the present edifice. Its tall features, of a most picturesque tint, were finally disclosed between the luxuriant woods, and over the lawns of the park, which every now and then, let in a glimpse of the Derbyshire hills. The scenery reminded us of the exquisite descriptions of Harewood.

"The deep embowering shades that veil Elfrida, and those of Hardwick; once veiled a form as lovely as the ideal graces of the poet, and conspired to a fate more tragical than that which Harewood witnessed.

"In front of the great gates of the castle court, the ground, adorned by old oaks, suddenly sinks to a darkly shadowed glade, and the view opens over the vale of Scarsdale bounded by the wild mountains of the Peak. Immediately to the left of the present residence, some ruined features of the ancient one, enwreathed with the rich drapery of ivy, give an interest to the scene, which the later but more historical structure heightens and prolongs. We followed, not without emotion, the walk which Mary had so often trodden, to the folding doors of the great hall, whose lofty grandeur, aided by silence, and seen under the influence of a lowering sky, suited the temper of the whole scene. The tall windows, which half subdue the light they admit, just allowed us to distinguish the large figures in the tapestry, above the oak wainscoting,

and showed a colonnade of oak, supporting a gallery along the bottom of the hall, with a pair of gigantic elk's horns flourishing between the windows opposite to the entrance. The scene of Mary's arrival, and her feelings upon entering this solemn shade, came involuntary to the mind; the noise of horses' feet, and many voices from the court: her proud, yet gentle and melancholy look, as, led by the Lord Keeper, she passed slowly up the hall; his somewhat obsequious, yet jealous and vigilant air, while, awed by her dignity and beauty, he remembers the terrours of his own queen; the silence and anxiety of her maids, and the bustle of the surrounding attendants.

"From the hall, a staircase ascends to the gallery of a small chapel, in which the chairs and cushions used by Mary still remain, and proceeds to the first story where only one appartment bears memorials of her imprisonment, the bed, tapestry, and chairs, having been worked by herself. This tapestry is richly embossed with emblematic figures, each with its title worked above it, and having been scrupulously preserved, is still entire and fresh.

"Over the chimney of an adjoining dining-room, to which, as well as to other apartments on this floor, some modern furniture has been added, is this motto carved in oak:

'There is only this: to fear God, and keep his commandments.'

"So much less valuable was timber than workmanship, when this mansion was constructed, that, where

the staircases are not of stone, they are formed of solid oaken steps, instead of planks; such as that from the second, or state story, to the roof, whence on clear days, York and Lincoln cathedrals are said to be included in the extensive prospect. This second floor is that which gives its chief interest to the edifice. Nearly all the apartments of it were allotted to Mary; some of them for state purposes, and the furniture is known by other proof than its appearance, to remain as she left it. The chief room or that of audience, is of uncommon loftiness, and strikes by its grandeur, before the veneration and tenderness arise, which its antiquities, and the plainly told tale of the sufferings they witnessed, excite."*

The contrast of these two descriptions will satisfy the reader that Mrs. Radcliffe knew as well how to copy nature, as when to indulge imagination. The towers of Udolpho are undefined, boundless, and wreathed in mist and obscurity; the ruins of Hardwick are as fully and boldly painted, but with more exactness of outline, and perhaps less warmth and magnificence of colouring.

It is singular that though Mrs. Radcliffe's beautiful descriptions of foreign scenery, composed solely from materials afforded by travellers, collected and embodied by her own genius, were marked in a particular

* Journey through Holland and the Western Frontier of Germany, with a return down the Rhine. To which are added, Observations during a Tour to the Lakes of Lancashire, Westmoreland, and Cumberland. By Ann Radcliffe. 4to. 1795. page 371.

degree (to our thinking at least,) with the characteristics of fancy portraits; yet many of her contemporaries conceived them to be exact descriptions of scenes which she had visited in person. One report, transmitted to the public by the Edinburgh Review, stated, that Mr. and Mrs. Radcliffe had visited Italy; that Mr. Radcliffe had been attached to one of the British embassies in that country; and that it was there his gifted consort imbibed the taste for picteresque scenery, for mouldering ruins, and for the obscure and gloomy anecdotes which tradition relates of their former inhabitants. This is so far a mistake, as Mrs. Radcliffe was never in Italy; but we have already mentioned the probability of her having availed herself of the acquaintance she formed in 1793 with the magnificent scenery on the banks of the Rhine, and the frowning remains of feudal castles with which it abounds. The inaccuracy of the reviewer is of no great consequence; but a more absurd report found its way into print, namely, that Mrs. Radcliffe, having visited the fine old gothic mansion of Haddon House, had insisted upon remaining a night there, in the course of which she had been inspired with all that enthusiasm for gothic residences, hidden passages, and mouldering walls, which mark her writings. Mrs. Radcliffe, we are assured, never saw Haddon House; and although it was a place excellently worth her attention, and could hardly have been seen by her without suggesting some of those ideas in which her imagination naturally revelled, yet we should suppose

the mechanical aid of invention — the recipe for fine writing—the sleeping in a dismantled and unfurnished old house, was likely to be rewarded with nothing but a cold, and was an affectation of enthusiasm to which Mrs. Radcliffe would have disdained to have recourse.

The warmth of imagination which Mrs. Radcliffe manifests, was naturally connected with an inclination towards poetry, and accordingly songs, sonnets, and pieces of fugitive verse, amuse and relieve the reader in the course of her volumes. These are not, in this place, the legitimate subject of criticism; but it may be remarked, that they display more liveliness and richness of fancy, than correctness of taste, or felicity of expression. The language does not become pliant in Mrs. Radcliffe's hands; and unconscious of this defect, she has attempted, nevertheless, to bend it into new structures of verse, for which the English is not adapted. The song of the Glow-worm is an experiment of this nature. It must also be allowed, that the imagination of the author sometimes carries her on too fast, and that if she herself formed a competent and perfect idea of what she meant to express, she has sometimes failed to convey it to the reader. At other times her poetry partakes of the rich and beautiful colouring which distinguishes her prose composition, and has, perhaps the same fault, of not being in every case quite precise in expressing the meaning of the author.

The following Address to Melancholy may be fairly selected as a specimen of her powers.

Spirit of love and sorrow—hail!
  Thy solemn voice from far I hear,
Mingling with evening's dying gale:
  Hail! with this sadly pleasing tear!

O! at this still, this lonely hour,
  Thine own sweet hour of closing day,
Awake thy lute, whose charmful power
  Shall call up fancy to obey;

To paint the wild romantic dream,
  That meets the poet's musing eye,
As on the bank of shadowy stream
  He breathes to her the fervid sigh.

O lonely spirit! let thy song
  Lead me through all thy sacred haunt;
The minster's moonlight aisles along,
  Where spectres raise their midnight chaunt!

I hear their dirges faintly swell!
  Then sink at once in silence drear,
While from the pillar'd cloister's cell,
  Dimly their gliding forms appear!

Lead where the pine-woods wave on high,
  Whose pathless sod is darkly seen,
As the cold moon, with trembling eye,
  Darts her long beams the leaves between.

Lead to the mountain's dusky head,
  Where, far below, in shades profound,

Wide forests, plains, and hamlets spread,
And sad the chimes of vesper sound.

Or guide me where the dashing oar,
Just breaks the stillness of the vale,
As slow it tracks the winding shore,
To meet the ocean's distant sail:

To pebbly banks, that Neptune laves,
With measured surges loud and deep,
Where the dark cliff bends o'er the waves,
And wild the winds of autumn sweep.

There pause at midnight's spectre'd hour,
And list the loud resounding gale;
And catch the fleeting moonlight's power,
O'er foaming seas and distant sail.

It cannot, we think, be denied, that we have here beautiful ideas expressed in appropriate versification; yet here, as in her prose compositions, the poetess is too much busied with external objects, too anxious to describe the outward accompaniments of melancholy, to write upon the feeling itself; and although the comparison be made at the expense of a favourite authoress, we cannot help contrasting the poetry we have just inserted with a song, by Fletcher, on a similar subject.

PAS. *(Sings.)*

Hence, all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!

There's nought in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see't
But only melancholy!

Welcome, folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that's fastened to the ground,
A tongue chained up without a sound!
Fountain heads, and pathless groves,
Places which pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, when all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still gloomy valley,
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

The Nice Valour,

In these last verses the reader may observe, that the human feeling of the votary of melancholy, or rather the pale passion itself, is predominant; that our thoughts are of, and with, the pensive wanderer; and that the "fountain heads, and pathless groves," like the landscape in a portrait, are only secondary parts of the picture. In Mrs. Radcliffe's verses, it is different. The accessories and the accompaniments of melancholy are well described, but they call for so much of our attention, that the feeling itself scarce solicits due regard. We are placed among melancholy objects, but if our sadness is reflected from them, it is not the growth of our own minds. Something like this may be observed in Mrs. Radcliffe's romances, where our curiosity is too much interested about the

evolution of the story, to permit our feelings to be acted upon by the distresses of the hero or heroine. We do not quite acknowledge them as objects of our interest personally, and, convinced that the authoress will extricate them from their embarrassments, we are more concerned about the course of the story, than the feelings or fate of those of whom it is told.

But we must not take farewell of a favourite author with a depreciating sentiment. It may be true that Mrs. Radcliffe rather walks in fairy land than in the region of realities, and that she has neither displayed the command of the human passions, nor the insight into the human heart, nor the observation of life and manners, which recommend other authors in the same line. But she has taken the lead in a line of compositon, appealing to these powerful and general sources of interest, a latent sense of supernatural awe and curiosity concerning whatever is hidden and mysterious; and if she has been ever nearly approached in this walk, which we should hesitate to affirm, it is at least certain, that she has never been excelled or even equalled.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.

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